

**ANOTHER CHANCE: COMBATING
RECIVIDISM AMONG AFRICAN
AMERICAN WOMEN**

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The ANOTHER CHANCE ministry is a holistic self-empowerment program that combats recidivism rates among African American women in Montgomery County TN. The qualitative research method employed follows three case studies. Recidivism rates among women have severely increased since the early 1990s in the United States. “From 1982 to 1991, the number of women arrested for drugs offenses increased by 89 percent.”¹ Findings in this study suggest that most of the incarcerations were drug related. ANOTHER CHANCE establishes a church based outpatient recovery program in co-operation with non-church based programs to combat recidivism among African American women in Montgomery County TN.

¹ Stephen R. Kandall, *Substance And Shadow* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 252.

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DEDICATION

My project is dedicated to the Black sisters that are fighting to win the war on drugs. In addition, to my deceased father, Otis L. Martin, Sr., the apple of my eye, and my two siblings Otis L. Martin, Jr. (deceased) and my sister Janice Sowell, who both triumphed over tragedy, and won the war on drugs, alcohol and marijuana! Thank You Lord.

INTRODUCTION

As a young girl growing up in early the 1960s, I observed my mother marching and protesting in the fight for justice in the African American Community, and watched my father policing the community with smiles on his face in search of peace and understanding, in the midst of the African American's plight. At the age of ten, I was inquisitive about my surroundings in the community and wanted to know what was really going on. Moreover, I discovered that injustice, racism, and discrimination were highly active and an enemy in the African American community that daunted the souls of many families. Many women and some men gathered at town meetings, mapping out their plans to move ahead. According to Bonnie Miller- McLemore in her book *Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology*, racism is defined as the institutionalization of power over others and the right to maintain that power.¹ This is type of power is visible today in economics, prisons, jails, banks and etc. and affects the African American community. The low-income housing projects were a few blocks from the Arctic Street community where I lived, but our fight for justice created a sense of friendship and family between the two communities in our struggle for the same purpose.

In the community's fight for justice, there were protest marches to promote the first African American police, protest for jobs, funds for home improvement, and against police brutality. As I grew older, I knew that there were many challenges ahead in trying to gain respect as citizens. After years of fighting for justice, things changed for the better in the community. However, we are still in the struggle against spiritual

¹ Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *Feminist & Womanist Pastoral Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 195.

wickedness in high places, which is an ongoing fight. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. died along with other Civil Rights leaders in their fight for justice. They helped to establish Civil Right legislation along voting rights, integration, low income home loans, minimum job wages and etc. that offered opportunities for many minorities. There is still much work to do and the fight for justice remains.

While social problems abound in our systems of education, courts, prisons, welfare, politics, finance, many churches join as oppressive institutions. They do not provide relevant ministries for support or teachings about how to combat or deal with life mishaps. The fear of facing tough problems and suffering with feelings of abandonment by ones community, for many women drug use become a quick fix. Drugs and alcohol addictions are stealing the lives of many good people that end in suicide, robbery, rape, homicide, and incarceration. Having two siblings that struggle with tripled addictions was a challenge; how to change the crippled minds, hearts and souls of individuals that feel hopeless and helpless in their struggle to survive? Nevertheless, both of my siblings triumphed over tragedy in their lives, when they stop cold-turkey their use of drugs, alcohol and marijuana. Both claimed that God was the powerful source that delivered them. Along with church attendance, prayer, worship and a close relationship with God, they won the war on drugs and alcohol in their lives. Their stories inspired this project.

Many women are victims, products and consumers of drugs and victims of the war on drugs. According to an FBI report, between 1980 –1992, the drug war led to an increase of seventy five thousand women incarcerated in American prisons. By the early 1990s, women comprised the fastest growing segment of the American population involved with the criminal justice system. Violent crimes by women had little to do with

the increase in incarcerations. Rather, most were due to legislative responses to the “war on drugs.” According to the same report, from 1982 to 1991, the number of women arrested for drugs offenses increased by 89 percent.² The war on drugs has been an on going fight, and based on statistics it has been a fight in the wrong direction. Both former Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan war on drug polices were failures, argues Elaine Sharp. With Nixon’s policy of demobilization and disengagement from the war on drugs, fund for rehab and treatment dwindled, and with Regan federal policy targeted users rather than distributors. This same policy was followed by subsequent presidencies.³

Our federal policies suggest a severe need of drug rehab programs in our churches to help combat drug and alcohol abuses that cripples the minds of many people. The church and pastors must take a focused leadership in the fight to win the drug war. Still, too many churches do not have such relevant ministries. The Black Church has always been a place of rest and protest for the African American people. If it is to be a reflection of God’s light in a in-sick world, it must stand in opposition to racism, injustice, discrimination, poverty, and drug addiction. This has been the challenge that motivated the ANOTER CHANCE ministry at Bread of Life Cathedral in Clarksville, TN. It is an empowerment program to combat recidivism of African American Women suffering from drug addiction.

“I tried to quit using crack and cocaine, but I couldn’t,” was the cry of African American women whom I have worked with in the program. The project was

² Stephen R. Kandall, *Substance And Shadow* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 252.

³ Elaine Sharp, *The Dilemma of the Drug Policy in the United States* (New York: HarperCollins College Publishers, 1994), 30-31, 54-56.

implemented as a church based ministry to empower women through spiritual growth, education and counseling toward overcoming their addictions and living life with an *I can do it attitude*. Three women shared their stories of drug used. This project follows their paths toward restoration as they have participated in the ANOTHER CHANCE program.

Chapter One examines my Spiritual autobiography and context as they support the need for this project. I discuss my own experiences growing up with two siblings whose lives were dominated by triple addictions, their spiritual struggles to overcome their addictions, and the outcomes of their individual struggles for deliverance. Both siblings tried to combat recidivism though their own will power, but failed. My brother attended drug rehabilitation and received counseling, but was unable to abandon his habits. Nevertheless, through spiritual discipline, both siblings came to triumph over their addictions and credited God as the source that delivered them free from their triple addictions and restored them to wholeness. Church attendance, Bible study and a personal relationship with God were key factors.

Chapter Two investigates the historical, biblical, theological and relevant literary sources on the war on drugs and the victimization of women by mass incarceration as a consequent of this war. It also explicates the biblical story of the Samaritan woman as it relates to African American women and the effects that drug addictions have on the quality of their lives. Womanist Theology is employed to gain a theological perspective for interpreting the plight of black women and their strategies for survival. Finally, the Black Church is examined to see how it has and can intervened into the lives of hopeless

and helpless victims of addictions and the need for robust leadership in combating recidivism among African American women.

Chapter Three addresses the research design deployed in examining the feasibility of this project. The research design was based on use of case studies of three African American women, who were residents in the Renewal House, an in-patient treatment and rehabilitation facility in Nashville, TN. The facility was established to restore women toward successful re-entry into their communities. This short chapter also discusses reasons for choosing this qualitative research method. This chapter details my interactions with the women through interviews I conducted with them to determine the effects of drugs on their lives. Finally, it describes how the women attempted to overcome their addictions.

Chapter Four offers a detail account of the implementation the ANOTHER CHANCE program at the Bread of life Cathedral with three women. This program is set up as a church-based program to combat recidivism and assess what is most helpful for these women in their struggle to remain sober. Essential components of the program are explained and assessed. It follows the activities of the three women through the program as they participated at every level of ministry from focus group activities such as the Life Experience colloquia, where the women share their stories, to active church participation, including Bible study, volunteerism, prayer and fasting, and pastoral counseling. Finally, it assesses the success of the program for the women's needs and what they see as the replication potential of the program beyond their experience.

Chapter Five concludes the project. It is a reflection on the overall process of designing and implementing the ANOTHER CHANCE program and summary of what

transpired. It concludes with an assessment of why such a program is critical to the relevancy of the Black Church as a center of social empowerment for the African American community.

CHAPTER ONE

ANOTHER CHANCE: FOUR MOMENTS IN DELIVERANCE, SPIRITUAL FORMATION, AND MINISTRY

The ardor to combat recidivism among African American women started as a young girl, I became an instrument in the struggle for deliverance from the disempowering effects of racism, discrimination, and the poverty that crippled the minds of the less fortunate, minority and poor. This chapter explores four moments toward deliverance, spiritual formation and ministry. The first moment is my experiences with two siblings who suffered with triple addictions. The second moment is my own experiences as a correction officer and chaplain and pastor. These experiences provided me with essential insights and tools that support this project. The third moment is my prophetic calling to prophesy deliverance, which eventually led to the fourth moment, the establishment of the Bread of Life Cathedral in Clarksville, TN and the formation of the ANOTHER CHANCE MINISTRY as a church-based center of deliverance for at risk women. The ANOTHER CHANCE program was conceived during my interaction with the Renewal House in Nashville TN. Renewal House provided me with a model for combating recidivism among African women within an out-patient church based ministry within the Bread of Life Cathedral. The theme that controls the units of this chapter is necessity of divine deliverance in the struggle against recidivism.

Another Chance for a Sister and Brother

My parents were disciplinarians, loving, caring and devoted to their business, jobs, church and children. My dad, Otis L. Martin Sr., deceased, was a former entrepreneur, police officer, church trustee, mason and farmer. He was six feet tall and weighed approximately four hundred fifty pounds. He was called by people in the community, *Big Otis*, the nice policeman who would give one a chance before taking to jail. Dad was a great father and had a heart of charity. He would give anyone food, clothes, shelter and money if needed. By the same token, my mother, Virginia, is known in the community as the Harriett Tubman of Clarksville. She has been a pioneer for justice for all people, regardless of race, creed, or ethnicity but especially for those behind prison bars and the less fortunate

However, my sister Janice, one year my younger, moved out of the family home at the age of eighteen and began partying with friends who smoked cigarettes, marijuana and drank alcohol. It was not long before Janice chose the same habits. Later, at age 28, she started using mind-altering substances such as crack/cocaine along with alcohol and marijuana. She had a triple addiction that affected her job, but she managed to support her addictions by boosting clothes, stealing, and dating drug dealers. Janice and her friends boost stolen clothes and many people bought them, including me. At that time, her life was all about fun, drinking and drugs. However, no one could sense that she was an addict, because she was a sharp flamboyant dresser with good personal hygiene. Her house was always tidy and her baby was always neat, clean and properly cared for.

Janice had a few bouts with her addictions, wanting to quit her lengthy drug habits, but realized she did not have the guts or will power to overcome them alone. Many times, she would overindulge in her addictions and need a designated driver to get her home safely from the club. On numerous occasions, she drove herself home in her old jalopy that leaked oil everyday. Several times, to support her habit, she would pick-pocket and steal to get drugs. Janice frequently went to jail for shoplifting and other offenses to support her habits. After a few years, she was tired of her habits, of hiding her addictions, and of her shame within the family. She decided to give it up. Janice tried to fight the cravings, but her flesh was weak and she would relapse every time. She never attended drug rehab or received counseling. Rather, she developed a close relationship with a higher power, attended Bible study and church, where she started praying and praising God for healing and deliverance. Shortly afterward, Janice describes having an encounter with the Holy Spirit that changed her way of thinking, living and gave her new perspective on life. She stopped cold turkey and quit all of her bad habits with alcohol, drugs and marijuana. She credits God for her sole deliverance and divine healing in her life. God helped her triumph over her tragedy.

Today, Janice might be called a "Holly Roller." In other words, she is a sanctified, born-again, and spirit filled Christian who is devoted to the work of the Lord. She is a prayer warrior at her church. Her prayers are fiery, powerful and spirit filled and leads to speaking in tongues. Her powerful testimonies and prayers can send people running for triumph and deliverance in the name of Jesus. Janice is a living witness that God is a deliverer, a healer, and "the chief of medicine." Currently, she is a successful

accountant and happily married to a former friend whom she dated during her younger years. In her ministry, she shares her story to help encourage others.

Otis Jr. is the only boy. He was gifted, very intelligent, and played guitar, horn, saxophone, and more often, drums. He was the drummer in a professional band.

However, at the age of eighteen, Otis drove a blue SS Heavy Chevy, with rims, a racing steering wheel that captivated the attention of a few young guys who smoked and drank alcohol on a daily basis, and Otis chose the same habits. On April 1, 1974, he decided to enlist in the army because his lifestyle was not what dad expected of him. While in the army, he had troubles that ended his career with an Honorable Discharge. After his discharge, his life worsened when he began to enjoy the pleasures of a party life. At 25 years old, his behavior changed drastically, staying out two or three nights before returning home, and he quit working at the family restaurant. When my parents demanded that he stop drinking and smoking and find a job, Otis became defiant. However, his life dwindled as he continued to indulge in mind-altering drugs and alcohol.

The family later discovered that Otis was addicted to crack/cocaine, marijuana and alcohol. He supported his addictions by stealing, manipulating and beating anyone he could. Even the family was held victim to his unhealthy lifestyle. Otis's addictions were out of control when he set my mother's house on fire after she refused to give him money to support his habits. Once he rammed his work truck into two of my parked cars, because I would not give him money. For years, the family suffered from his addictions. Otis went to jail numerous times for shoplifting, breaking and entering, grand larceny, possession of drugs and paraphernalia, and fighting and threatening people lives.

After years of wrestling with his addictions, Otis wanted to stop using drugs, but also weak, as was my sister, he did not have the will power to do so. He attended drug rehabilitation, counseling, Alcohol Anonymous a few times, and doctors prescribed medicine to combat his addictions. All these interventions failed. Years of living as an addict caused Otis many health problems. Although medicine was prescribed to combat the symptoms, a cure for his illnesses was beyond human control. He suffered with liver, blood and mental disorders. However, on New Years Eve of 2000, Otis made a vow to the Lord that he would kick his bad habits and serve God. Soon afterward, he repented and started attending church and Bible study on a regular basis, praying and praising God, often. Extremely knowledgeable about the Word of God, Otis could quote many scriptures by heart. He understood that God was the source of his deliverance, setting him free from all of his addictions. Six years later, on March 15, 2006 on my mother's birthday, Otis, Jr., was rushed to an emergency room, complaining of chest pain, loss of breath, weakness and dizziness. As Otis laid on the gurney in the emergency room, he whispered softly in a faint breath, "Happy birthday mom." Then a nurse wheeled him into the ICU. Early the next morning, he died of pneumonia at the age of 47. Otis, Jr. often predicated that he would die in his forties. Today, my family prays that he is resting in the arms of God.

To Set the Captives Free: My Experience in Criminal Justice

As president of the National Association for the Advancement of Color People (NAACP), my mother kept me and my siblings busy passing out pertinent information concerning the plights of the community. This is when I learned that discrimination and injustice were prevalent and that they attacked African Americans in every aspect of their

lives, especially in poverty stricken communities. We worked persistently and thoughtfully to change the mentality of the white lie that crippled many African Americans, namely that blacks were dirty and lazy. It was also in this context that my passion to combat recidivism of African American women drew stronger. By my late twenties, I began making conscious decisions to combat recidivism among African American women when I accepted a job as a correction officer in 1996 at a prison that housed females as well as males, in Nashville, Tennessee.

I worked mostly with women and only occasionally with men. During my tenure at the prison, I observed the overflow of African Americans. The first day on the job was a learning experience in which I noticed a special relationship between many women that cared for each other. Although I never asked, several women freely shared their stories of being incarcerated, and they found in me a source for help and hope to overcome their fears of relapsing after discharge. Although I was an immature Christian, the Word became my sword and foundation for supporting their theological questions. Most women were incarcerated for offenses such as drug abuse, selling drugs, stealing, prostitution and violation of probation. Further, their conversations with me suggested that drugs were coping devices to combat life problems such as not being able to obtain decent jobs for survival, own a home, buy a new car, or just have luxury items. Moreover, many of the women grew up in single-headed household headed by their mothers, and they were searching for an absentee father's love.

Not surprising, many male inmates claimed some of the same reasons for their incarcerations. Their ages range from twenty one to fifty five years old. Several men asserted that they were drug pushers/hustlers, abusers, and gang members for many years.

A few inmates stated that they sold drugs to have nice things in life like other people and to support their mothers so that they could purchase new homes. Further, many were reared in poverty without a father and that street life was a byproduct of a dysfunctional family. Some argued that they were unable to obtain decent jobs, but fast money relieved the stress of not being able to feed the family or it boosted their self-image. Many of these women and men are exiles of their community because the systems of education, courts, politics, church, and dysfunctional families have not provided interventions for improving their lives.

Presently, I am a chaplain at the jail, which is a revolving door that shelters many African Americans of both genders. My job is counseling and teaching, which allows me a great deal of interaction with inmates. Most of the inmates are repeated offenders. I discovered that numerous inmates came to church, prayed and worshiped God. However, I also saw that they continued to live the same life style that led to their incarcerations. It is simply the case that our social systems fail to provide goods and services needed for sustaining them against recidivism. The social, political, educational, church systems need to be reformed, if we are to promote better living conditions for this at risk population.

Prophecy Deliverance: A Call to Ministry

As a youth, God began to show up in my life in mysterious ways. The first sign that I was being called to be a prophetess at the age of ten was when I preached my first sermon to my sister, Janice, in the front yard of our home. I built an altar, wrapped myself in a white sheet, and tied a belt around my waist. I placed my Bible on the podium, and I spoke profoundly about the unethical life of my sister. I admonished her to come

out of the streets smoking, drinking, and partying with Satan all night long while “hooping” like the old preachers I had heard in the old country churches. I made known that God was not pleased with her behavior and advised her to come out of the streets. Our neighbors, the Young family, witnessed this occasion. They lived across the street and often talked and laughed about this experience. Little did we know that this prophecy would come true in Janice’s life.

Although I was not spiritually mature, my prophetic gift became more prominent during my adolescent years. During my early twenties, I felt that God blessed me with a sixth sense to be a fortuneteller. My girl friends shared their stories, and I discerned what was going to happen between them and their mates. I was always on target. My friends, males and females, were curious as to how I knew what was going to happen. I never doubted my sixth sense. To this day, the anointing is more powerful than ever. My charismatic experiences changed my way of thinking, and I began to ponder what was going on in my life.

In March of 1997, the power of the Holy Spirit saturated my mind, body and soul, and I became thirsty for the Word. I was so hungry for the Word that I felt as if I could eat it. During this time, I worked with the Montgomery County School System as a bus driver and matriculated at American Baptist College, In Nashville, TN. Afterward, I started a Bible study in my home. The Holy Spirit was so powerful in my life that I began to isolate myself in my bedroom to pray, cry and read the Word, trying to understand the meaning of what I was reading. An event occurred that led me to research the scriptures. During my spiritual reflections, I was lead to several scriptures: 2Timothy 2:15; Hosea 4:6; James 4:7; John 16:12-13. It was the last one that frightened me most and stirred my

spirit. I was astonished by the manner in which I was lead to those particular passages. After much mediation and attending a weeklong preachers' conference, I was convinced that God was calling me for a purpose.

It was the vivid dream that really aroused my attention. In the dream, Jesus was walking toward me with his disciples and I was walking backwards. Jesus approached me with a question: "If I want you to preach, what you are going to do?" I woke up, yelling preach! preach! preach! This was the last episode that assured me that God had called me to preach. In addition, I received confirmations from guest preachers and pastors who visited my home church. The most profound confirmation was from a white pastor of a church in Smyrna, TN., whom I trained to learn the bus routes. I have never anyone accompany me, but the supervisor sent him to me. I thought that this was unusual. However, we related with each other. Our spirits were familiar. He told me his story of why he left Smyrna and the church because of martial problems and that God had sent him to tell me something. This man was a pastor of his church for twenty years and a prophet who prophesied to me. I had not shared anything with him, but, he knew that I was an immature preacher. He asked me if I knew what a prophet was. I replied, "yes" and explained it to him. He assured me that I was right. As he held my hands up, he prophesied that I was going to preach my first sermon in an A.M.E. church. The pastor admonished me to be nice to my pastor, because I would be more knowledgeable than him. Moreover, he said that my ministry was going to be great. Two weeks later, I preached my first sermon at an A.M.E. Church.

I began my preaching career in 1998 when I was invited to visit an African Methodist Episcopal church, a few blocks from my home. A deaconess approached and

asked me to preach for a special occasion. I was hesitant and advised her that I had never preached before. But she replied: “That’s good. I will need to put it in the newspaper.” I replied: “No, don’t.” The deaconess insisted it was a big Sunday and needed publicity. I was uncertain about this, but needed to accept the invitation. I was petrified and felt that I was not ready. After months of meditation and long prayers, I felt like I could preach up a storm. On March 22, 1998, I preached my first sermon entitled: *When God Speaks, Something Happens*. The church is an old small white building, located in East Inn, a couple of blocks from my house. The little old white church was packed and people were standing outside to listen. I was acting pastor and my pastor, Reverend Stillwater,¹ who opposed woman in the pulpit, shared the pulpit with me. I asked him to read the scripture and he did. Moreover, a majority of members from Standstill Baptist Church attended, along with the male chorus, which provided the music.

Despite my lack of experience, God’s presence moved in a mighty way. The next Sunday, back at Standstill Baptist Church, a mother of the church came to me, and the pastor was also walking toward us. Unaware of his presence, she made this comment: “Wanda you did a great job. I really enjoyed your message. You out preached the pastor.” Rev. Stillwater heard every word. I responded: “No, God did, I am just a vessel trying to do his will.” Then the mother turned and looked at the pastor and said: “You are going to have to do better in your preaching.” He and I looked at each other and went our separate ways. I thought to myself that I hoped he and I would not be in competition. I knew then that there was no hope or chance of me preaching or praying at my home church.

¹ The actual names of the pastor and church have been changed to protect their anonymity.

One evening after work, a flyer was stuck inside my front door about a revival that started the same night, and Dr. Jerry Maynard was the revival preacher. I decided to attend, because I was yearning for God and needed a quench for my thirst. Consequently, I entered the church and sat about ten seats from the front during praise and worship. I looked up and the pastor pointed to me and called me forward. I was astonished and somewhat in disbelief, because I normally do not experience such things. However, I slowly walked forward, and he asked me to raise my hands as he prophesied to me. He said: "Young lady the church that you are at now, you are not able to use your gifts, for what God has called you to do." In awe, I looked at him with tears in my eyes, wondering how he knew what was occurring in my life. This pastor had never seen or met me, then he spoke briefly concerning the command God gave Abraham, God told Abraham to leave his family, and go to a place of promise, Abraham obeyed and was blessed to be the father of many nations, he prayed for me at the revival.

I wanted to meet with him after service, because he read me like a book. I waited patiently after service to speak with him, and he advised me to leave my church, pray and God will direct my path. The next Sunday, Pastor Stillwater made it known to me that the Baptist doctrines did not allow women to preach. In response, I left the Baptist Church in good standing, delivering a spirit filled speech, and the church responded with love and best wishes. At this point, I was in search of a new church to exercise the gifts that God had bestowed upon me. While on my mission, I visited many denominations, but my soul was not satisfied. I remembered Dr. Maynard, who preached the revival in Clarksville, but his church was in Nashville, Tennessee. I visited and attended Dr. Maynard's church

for a year, and was lead by the spirit to join Pentecostal Tabernacle in 1998 where I became a part of the ministerial staff.

The *Bread of Life Bible Study* continued in my home every Wednesday night, souls came to Christ, and souls were baptized at Pentecostal Tabernacle. Dr. Maynard prophecy was true. On numerous occasions, he offered the pulpit to me to develop my gifts. However, the Bible Study season ended in June of 2003. Shortly after, I began street evangelism on street corners in J.C. Napier Homes in Nashville, TN., in nursing homes, and in the Clarksville jail for approximately a year and a half. Furthermore, I joined a Radio Evangelistic Ministry, called *Forgiveness Anonymous*, which broadcast on 1240 A.M. every Monday morning. We spoke on current controversial issues that caused dissension among people. Through this ministry of forgiveness, listeners were encouraged to release anger and promote peace and love for one another. In May 2004, the radio ministry season ended, and I graduated from Vanderbilt Divinity School. Upon graduation, I was perplexed concerning my next move, whether to open my business, start a church, or get my Doctor of Ministry. While at Vanderbilt, the Lord spoke to me advising me to start a church, and a young man in the community asked me when I was going to start a church. This was my confirmation.

Bread of Life Cathedral: A Center of Deliverance

I first started my beauty salon, called Anointed Creations in August 2004, so that I could have a meeting place for the church. Afterwards, the church began on October 10, 2004, and a printed announcement was in the local newspaper. A few days later, the Leaf Chronicle called and asked to do an interview with me. I was a bit hesitant, but I accepted. Shortly, the newspaper printed a full story concerning the Genesis of the

church. The news reporter ask why the name “Bread of Life Cathedral?” My response was that God is the Bread of Life, based on John 6: 35, and it is God who is leading the way in the development of the church. In addition, the church’s vision and designation were given by the Holy Spirit. Today, we no longer meet in my beauty shop, but worship at the Quality Inn, downtown Clarksville.

It is my belief that the church is a mission and that we exist to efficaciously proclaim the Gospel to unbelievers for a life and world changing experience. Bread of Life’s hope is to restore the lost, un-churched, and backslidden persons to wholeness to become influential, effective and prosperous disciples. Bread of Life Cathedral is an evangelical non-Denominational church. The Great Commission (Matt.28: 19-20) drives the church’s mission:

As ambassadors of Christ, our tasks is to reach out and invite individuals to seek a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through, Evangelism, Discipleship, Worship, Foreign Mission and fellowship for the building-up of God’s Kingdom on earth.

The church vision is:

To empower individuals and families to live a holistic and successful life through relevant ministries and the word of God. Bread of Life proclaims the word, transform lives, lead by the Holy Spirit, travels by faith and declare victory over the adversary, in the name of Jesus.

Bread of Life seeks to save people from genocide and systems of injustice, racism, and discrimination in the world. It is the context for the ANOTHER CHANCE ministry to establish a church based model for combating recidivism among African Americans who have fallen between the cracks of our social systems. The membership is mostly young energetic, African American single college women and a couple of men. Their ages range from twenty-one to forty eight. Their income ranges from ten thousand

to thirty thousand dollars a year. The church is located downtown, Clarksville in a community surrounded by middle class and poverty stricken people. The ministries of the church are set up to combat the problems of life and systems that harass individuals and families living in low-income areas. The task of the ANOTHER CHANCE ministry is to empower African women spiritually, physically, and psychologically to combat recidivism and to live sober lives with an: *I can do it attitude*.

In order to develop the ministry, I investigated the work of the Renewal House in Nashville, Tennessee, which is a non-church based program. Renewal House is a residential women's treatment facility that houses former drug and alcohol abusers who have been in trouble with the law. The facility is set up to give women another chance in life. Renewal House is a five-phase structured program that residents can complete in six to fifteen months, depending on the time needed to acquire the skills necessary for sustaining sobriety and independent living.² The Renewal House offers counseling sessions, group therapy, life skills, transportation, and church services to help foster a sober lifestyle among its residents. I was privileged to have met the residents, interview five of them, and learn from my contact elements that were most helpful in empowering residents toward a life of sobriety. The ANOTHER CHANCE project at Bread of Life Cathedral uses similar elements in order to replicate the successes of this model within a church-based context.

² Renewal House. Residential Program Information. 2005. See appendix B.

Summary

This chapter reviews those moments in my spiritual autobiography that led to the focus of this project. I first discussed my own experiences growing up with two siblings whose lives were dominated by triple addictions, their spiritual struggles to overcome their addictions, and the outcomes of their individuated struggles that characterized what measure of deliverance each experienced from their addictions. Both siblings tried to combat recidivism through their own will power, but failed. My brother attended drug rehabilitation and received counseling, but could not abandon his habits. Nevertheless, through their life disappointments and mishaps, both siblings triumphed over their tragedies and claimed God as the source that delivered, healed and set them free from their triple addictions. In addition, church attendance, Bible study and a personal relationship with God were key factors.

Janice has been drug free for seventeen years and is happily married to her husband for seven years. A key to Janice's sustained recovery is her devotion to scripture which says: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13), biblical narratives that relate to her struggles, shedding light and giving strength to triumph over her addictions. Before his death on March 15, 2006, my brother, Otis, was sober for five years. He claimed that his faith in God, the word, and being a disciple of Christ were driving forces that strengthen his character and gave him victory over his addictions. Their stories remain powerful motives behind the goals of the ANOTHER CHANCE project.

I next discussed how my adolescent years of combating racism, discrimination and injustice in my community, while following the lead of my mother, informed my desire to be a Christian activist within my community. Under my mother's leadership, my tasks were to inform the community about town meetings and programs by knocking on doors and handing out literature to combat polluted social systems. We worked conscientiously to combat injustice in the systems of the courts, and other social, political, educational, health and welfare systems.

A short section treated my experience as a criminal justice agent within the penal system in Clarksville, where I have served numerous jobs from correction officer to chaplain and counselor. I discovered that many women became drug abusers to cope with life problems. Drugs were coping devices to deal with systems of the courts (unfair sentencing), education (dropout/racism), health (limited health care), political alienation (no voice for the poor), and jail (no rehab for abusers). Within these systems they found no hope or help to handle life problems. Racism, discrimination and injustices toward minorities, poor and Africa Americans have been an on going fight in America. My experience in criminal justice offered me a laboratory in which my contacts with inmates have served not only as a background condition for this project but supplied much of the data that support the feasibility of this project.

A great deal of this chapter rehearsed the events surrounding my call to ministry and the eventual establishing of the Bread of Life Cathedral, which is the context of the ANOTHER CHANCE project. It is important to emphasize that this ministry for combating recidivism among African American women is grounded on the experience of an African American woman. I am very much aware of my own social location and

understand how easy it is for women to fall prey to our patriarchal, phalocentric, criminal justice system. It is a system that is designed to punitively regulate inmates in ways that conceal the social problems that place these women at risk of recidivism and close off their possibilities for sustained reintroduction into the goods and services needed to sustain them from relapse. It is with this knowledge that Bread of Life Cathedral hopes to provide a church-based model for empowering these at risk women.

The chapter concluded with a discussion on the Renewal House, which is a residential treatment facility that houses drug and alcohol women abusers and offers a program to combat recidivism. Based on contact with this facility, I intend to set-up a similar model to empower women to live a holistic and successful life through relevant ministries. In the next chapter, I discuss the critical foundational supports for this project. The review of the empirical literature will explore the causes surrounding the problem of recidivism. The biblical offers an exposition on a significant text that relates to the forms of abuse and alienation of women that stem from their relation to unjust social systems. Chapter Two concludes with Womanist theological directives for understanding how to respond to the crisis of women at risk of recidivism.

CHAPTER TWO

ANOTHER CHANCE FOR WOMEN AT THE WELL: CRITICAL SOURCES

This chapter presents the empirical, historical, biblical, and theological critical groundwork for the ANOTHER CHANCE ministry. It explores Womanist Theology as it relates to the pain of abandonment grounded on unjust systems of life such as political, economic, social, welfare and church systems. The biblical story of the Samaritan Woman is one of many narratives that model the pain of an outcast that ends in deliverance and freedom from the plights of her community. Further, the chapter investigates the review of literature that historically informs the reasons for the abuse of drugs and alcohol among African women and suggests a plan for recovery.

The Black Church and the Empirical Facts

In this section, I have combined the theoretical and empirical data with a review of the relevant literature. This chapter focuses on the “War on drugs” that has not only exacerbated the pervasive abuses of drugs in this nation but has been the major factor in the overwhelming incarcerations of African American women who are the empirical subjects of this project. Today, many women are victims of the war on drugs that results in low-self esteem, anger, and renders them outcasts of their society. The war on drugs has been an on going fight, and this fight has led to an increase of women incarcerations. “During the 1980s and 1990s an

increase number of women entered the criminal justice system.”¹ Between 1980 and 1992, the number of women in prison in the United States tripled to a total of seventy-five thousand. By the early 1990s, women comprised the fastest growing segment of the American population involved with the criminal justice system. Most of these arrests and confinements were not due to an increase in the severity of the crimes women committed but to changes in the legislative response to the “war on drugs” and in law enforcement practice. ²

From 1982 to 1991, the number of women arrested for drugs offenses increased by 89 percent.”³ In 1989, 63 percent of women in national arrestee populations were illicit drug users, according to the National Institute on Justice 1990.⁴ Another survey conducted by American Correctional Association in 1990 found that half of the women in prison used cocaine; another 20 percent admitted to daily heroin use.⁵ Drugs have ruined the lives of many people, especially African American Women, and have been a major factor in many divorces that separate children from their parents and contribute to dysfunctional families.

Many drug abusing women possess feelings of failure and feel themselves to be outcast of their society because their dreams are tarnished and their lives are torn apart. Professor Peter Paris explains the conditions that contribute to these feelings. He says:

¹ Stephen R. Kandall, *Substance And Shadow* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 252.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 252.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Persons are related to their sociopolitical context, as parts are related wholes. Neither has any existence apart from the other. Thus, whenever particular social groups - religious, ethnic, economic and the like - stand in opposition to the basic societal values, they necessarily threaten the entire social order. Whenever a pattern of rejection persists from one generation to another and is firmly rooted in an ideology, the rejected ones become destined to a veritable permanent state of exile wherein they have no sense of belonging, neither to the community nor to the territory. Since it is necessary for persons to be nourished by a communal eros in order to become fully human, an imposed exile necessitates the formation of a substitute community, and as we have seen, that has been one of the major functions of the black churches.⁶

Paris goes on to quote Howard Thurman concerning people who are outcasts from their community:

If there are citizens within the state who by definition, stated or implied, are denied freedom of access to the resources of community as established within the state, such persons are assailed at the very foundation of their sense of belonging . . . the term "second class citizen" is often used to describe such a status. This means that such persons are "outsiders" living in the midst of "insiders" required to honor the same demands of sovereignty but denied the basic rewards of sovereignty.⁷

Paris says: "The profound nature of the exclusion about which we are speaking cannot be grasped apart from an understanding of the integral relationship between persons and society. Whenever persons are rejected by society, the result is a loss of place; the result is exile."⁸

Paris's account comports well with empirical observations and analyses of residents at the Renewal House. Of the five women interviewed and the three used in

⁶ Peter J. Paris, *The Social Teachings of the Black Churches* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 57-59.

⁷ Ibid., 58-59.

⁸ Paris, *The Social Teachings of the Black Churches*, 59.

this study, all claimed that they suffered feelings of low self-esteem, abandonment, oppression and depression because they were not able successfully to achieve adequate education, jobs, material possessions, and that drugs were coping devices in their struggle. They also internalized unsolved problems, disappointments and hurts, which affected their mental and physical health.

In *Counseling Depressed Women*, Susan J. Dunlap suggests, "Depression is anger turned inward. Depression, according to this view, happens when an angry person cannot or will not express anger toward its appropriate objects. The result is that the anger remains "bottled up" and therefore the object of the anger becomes the self."⁹ This view suggests that the depressed person is also secretly a hostile person, and in our culture, hostility means, "not nice." It also suggests "an immaturity in being able to handle conflict, interpersonal relationships, and the inevitable irritations and frustrations in human life."¹⁰ This type of behavior is attributed to drugs and alcohol abusers who become frustrated and angry when trying to deal at life problems. After the individual's high descends, she is right back to square one, waking up only to find that the problems still exist.

The Renewal House started in 1996, because a judge saw there were many mothers suffering from the disease of addiction, and that 80% of the families were broken up that affected children were being torn from this disease.¹¹ As participants in the

⁹ Susan Dunlap, *Counseling Depressed Women* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 102.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Renewal House, *Preserving Families Affected by Addiction*, available from <http://www.renewalhouse.org>; accessed Dec. 2006.

facility, the women interviewed claimed to have accomplished better cognitive skills and living skills toward overcoming their addictions. When asked: "How has this program benefited them?" One woman said "It has taught me how to deal with life on life terms. How to accept people the way they are and learn to accept people's opinions that I have no control over." To the question, "What caused you to use drugs?" one said: "loneliness, feeling abandon and unwanted by parents, I wanted to be loved by my parents. My Father wanted a boy, so I tried to be the boy that my father wanted, but he still did not show me any love. He never paid child support and he went to jail. He later died and I was angry with him."

Another said: "I dated a man that sold drugs. I tried it and liked it, so I kept chasing after that first high that was awesome, which I cannot explain it. However, I was a depressed person and was not happy with my life, before I start taking drugs." From these empirical observations, most women in the Renewal House were trying to deal with some sort of pain, whether social (friends, family or community), physical, verbal abuse, psychological (depression, emotional, anger) and or the single parent syndrome. Many of these women found themselves lost in their sufferings and simply gave up. They found themselves eventually incarcerated or under court supervision. They needed resources such as hope, love, and forgiveness for "another chance."

Dunlap defines hope as an action word. "Hope is not confined to a feeling or an attitude. It is also a way of acting or behaving. It can involve acting in spite of a feeling of hopelessness, in spite of a sense of futility. It can be an action that is counterintuitive, an act that goes against all within us that tells us, 'This is useless.' Therefore, it takes

great courage to engage in this action called hope.”¹² In the interviews, love was an issue in the sense that one woman said she felt unloved by her father. Love is significant for healing. Love suggests forgiveness and understanding of ones mistakes, faults, depression, and anger. It implies forgiveness in spite of ones mistakes and sinful behavior, which requires confession and repentance. Accepting these spiritual gifts rests in the hands of the victim.

When asked, “What are you hoping to accomplished through this program?,” one respondent said: “I want to get my GED, something I could not do on my on, because I would stress out. And I want to learn to be a good mother to my children and stay sober.” Another said: “I want to stay clean, drug free, accomplish material things (car, house), get back on the right track of life and have a job and learn to live to function in society.” Still another said: “I want to maintain sobriety and everything will fall in place, but my kids never went into state custody.” Every woman interviewee either contacted the Renewal House through personal contacts or called to inquire about membership in the program.

In *Cultivating Wholeness*, Margaret Kornfeld asserts that in facilitating healing, “It is helpful to remember that you are not, in and of yourself, a healer. You are a facilitator in the mysterious healing process that has already begun in those who call you for help. People who call you usually unaware that healing or change has already begun. But, in all cases, something has already moved within them that allowed them to reach

¹² Dunlap, *Counseling Depressed Women*, 122.

out and ask for help.”¹³ Kornfeld offers this principle: “People do not change when we try to change them. They change when they feel accepted as they are and when they are able to listen to their own solutions to problems.”¹⁴ Black churches have to be a part of that change. However, despite the fact that women make up the majority membership of most Black churches, many churches do not have programs that promotes rehabilitation and re-entry of these African American women into society,

According to Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, women are the majority in the church and leaders of most organization. In *If It Wasn't For The Women*, Gilkes says: “Historically, African American women in the United States have produced and shaped diverse and critical models of leadership and community organization.”¹⁵ She also says that:

In the history of African American churchwomen, Nannie Helen Burroughs was one such woman. Not only was she a leader of church women, but she was an activist, educator, and a writer who shared her ideas in ways that fostered the vision of racial uplift, she shared with women in the National Baptist Convention and National Association of Colored Women's club.¹⁶

Gilkes asserts “African American women have insisted upon participating in the political destiny of black people.”¹⁷ Gilkes mentions of a few:

Maria Stewart, who offered incisive political-theological perspectives on the plight of black people. Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, both framed their activism in religious terms. Two women, Ella Baker and Fannie Lou Hamer, both exude a

¹³ Margaret Zipse Kornfeld, *Cultivating Wholeness* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2000), 70.

¹⁴ Kornfeld, *Cultivating Wholeness*, 77.

¹⁵ Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, *If It Wasn't For The Women* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2001), 142.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 205.

common spirituality in spite of their radically different social origins.¹⁸

Consider the empowerment ethics of Harriet Tubman (nick named Moses) who escaped from slavery and returned to free other slaves on the Underground Railroad; Sojourner Truth also fought to free slaves and organized tirelessly for the abolition of slavery and for the rights of women. Ella Baker, the daughter of a minister, became a traveling prophet for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People as a field secretary before becoming an executive director of Southern Christian Leader Conference (SCLC) and initiated the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee. Fannie Lou Hamer, was explicitly theological in her calls for participation in the civil rights movement.¹⁹ Then there is Alice Walker, the author of *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*, from whose book Womanist Theology takes its theological guidelines.²⁰ These women are just a few pioneers that made a difference in the African American community.

Living in a male denominated society, a few male writers also recognized the strength and leadership of women that have stood at the front line to fight injustice in America. Dr. Dwight Hopkins asserts that

Black women stood at the forefront of the fight of the Civil Rights Movement. Indeed, Rosa Parks, a black Christian, started the movement when she refused to give her bus seat to a demanding white man Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955. Hopkins argues that

¹⁸ Gilkes, *If It Wasn't For The Woman*, 205.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 206.

²⁰ Dwight N. Hopkins, *Introducing Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005), 125–129.

women make up 70 to 80 percent of the congregation in most black churches.²¹

Today, women are the heart beat of black America, if not the “main vessel” that pumps the blood to make things happen for a better life for the African American race socially, physically, mentally, financially and politically.

In *Sisters in the Wilderness*, Professor Delores S. Williams says that black women are intelligent people living in a technological world where nuclear bombs, defilement of the earth, racism, sexism, dope and economic injustices attest to the presence power of evil in the world.²² William’s statement reflects the life of many African American women today who suffer drug addictions. How can the Black Church transform African American women for a better life? Transformation can only come through self-discipline, education, love, and the Word of God. The challenge to the Black Church is to be a source of transformation. Healing is a process that requires dedicated leadership to combat those systems of evil and sin that contribute to the plight of so many African American women stuck in the impasses of multiple addictions, on the one hand, and the War on drugs, on the other. Tanya T. Sharpe asserts that for black Americans, family formation and gender role developed with severe social and economic constraints imposed upon them by institutional racism.²³

These constraints did not remain constant over time. The ebb and flow of social policy toward blacks by the dominant culture required flexibility in self-definition and gender role differentiation. Blacks have faced a series of four abrupt social changes that necessitates rapid restructuring of gender base

²¹ Hopkins, *Introducing Black Theology of Liberation*, 128.

²² Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005), 165.

²³ Sharpe, *Behind the Eight Ball* (New York: Haworth Press, 2005), 27.

identities and roles: (1) enslavement, (2) manumission and segregation, (3) civil rights legislation and desegregation, and (4) late-twentieth-century reverses in civil rights policy. These transitional periods were not weather equally.²⁴

The War on Drugs

Today, many women are victims, products and consumers of society and victims of the war on drugs. In the early 1970s, there were incredibly high levels of public concern about drugs, and several major pieces of drug legislation were passed. The drug issue emerged at times when the nation convulsed with anxieties about perceived threats from lower-social-class elements, and racial minorities, as in the concerns about opium use by Chinese laborers and cocaine use by Southern blacks in the first decade of the twentieth century.”²⁵ According to Sharp:

Nixon’s war on drugs rapid mobilization of treatment-oriented war on drugs was followed by an equally dramatic demobilization. The demobilization was signaled in what is commonly referred to as Nixon’s “turning the corner” speech. Nixon claimed that the nation had turned the corner on drug addiction. His rapid disengagement of the war on drugs came through reductions in his newly established drug treatment and rehabilitation plan that began to decline after 1973, in absolute as well as inflation-adjusted dollars, while the budget for drug-law enforcement continued to increase. Nixon’s disengagement in the war on drugs affected numerous drug abusers and users. However, those who interpret the entire war on drugs, viewed it as a reelection ploy point out of the claims of success made during the 1972 campaign months.²⁶

During the President Ronald Reagan administration, many citizens were concern about drug problems in the mid-1980 in the United States. The emphasis on demand

²⁴Sharpe, *Behind the Eight Ball*, 27.

²⁵ Elaine B. Sharp, *The Dilemma of Drug Policy in the United States* (New York: HarperCollins College Publishers, 1994), 23.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

reduction was evident within three months of the new president's inauguration, says

Sharp:

At a news conference on March 7, 1981, President Regan was asked what his priorities would be with respect to the drug problem. He responded this way: I've had people talk to me about increased effort to head off the export into the United States of drugs from neighboring nations. With borders like ours, that as the main method of halting the drug problem in America is virtually impossible: It's like carrying water in a sieve. It is my belief, firm belief that the answer to the drug problem comes through winning over the users to the point that we take the customers away from the drug.²⁷

Sharp continues:

Although the new policy approach included some specific goals, such as a 30 percent reduction in daily drug use by high school seniors, there was little detail about actual programs or resource commitments that would lead to these desired reductions in demand. The government did not establish and fund new programs for treatment and prevention of drug abuse. The emphasis was largely on rhetorical efforts and symbolic gestures, including a high-visibility series of public appearances and statements by First Lady Nancy Regan.²⁸

Today, it is a fact that drug trafficking is prevalent in the United States because drugs are being sold on the street corners in many cities by drug dealers, and many people are addicted to various drugs, whether prescription or illegal drugs. The United States receives imports from several foreign countries and statewide from Mexico, China and South Florida, which receives imports from Central and South America.²⁹

In September 1986, the drug issue was highly salient and highly politicized. American public had been mobilized about the issue and as congressional elections approached, the president elevated

²⁷ Sharp, *The Dilemma of Drugs Policy in the United States*, 49.

²⁸ Ibid., 50.

²⁹ Ibid.

the issue to a prominent place on the government agenda. In this context, Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986. The legislation increased penalties for drug trafficking offenses, including provisions that doubled penalties for adults who used juveniles in drug trafficking and tripled the penalty for those convicted of trafficking near a school. The legislation authorized \$230 million per year for three years in federal grants to states for drug law enforcement and a total of \$700 million over three years in federal grant to state governments, local schools, colleges and universities for drug education programs.³⁰

Today, the war on drugs affects many black women because the government refuses to combat it authentically. Most important, it accelerated America's high percentage of women's incarcerations and abusers. In a televised speech in 1989, President George H. W. Bush discussed his Drug Policy that targets drug law enforcement. He said: "I am proposing that we enlarge our criminal justice system across the board, at the local, state and federal levels alike. We need more prisons, more jails, more courts, and more prosecutors. So tonight, I'm requesting altogether almost a billion-and-a-half dollar increase in drug-related federal spending on law enforcement."³¹ In Sharp's analysis, "The president's proposal came during a time of enormous budget difficulty, exacerbated by partisan wrangling over how to minimize budget deficits."³² According to Sharp:

The Bush administration suggested that nearly half of the resources for the proposed drug program could come from cuts in the federal aid to states for assistance with immigration impacts and that the remainder could come from abolishing the Economic Development Administration, cuts in the juvenile justice programs of the Justice Department, a delay in the purchase of a new communications

³⁰ Sharp, *The Dilemma of the Drug Policy*, 55.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

³² *Ibid.*

system for the Defense Department, and use of monies originally intended for operating public housing projects.³³

Arnold S. Trebach suggests that we are losing the war on drugs for several reasons. "The drug laws are irrational, and based upon flawed scientific assumptions and are out of touch with the desires of millions of Americans."³⁴ Further, he asserts that:

We delude one another into thinking that certain dangerous drugs such as alcohol and tobacco are less harmful than other dangerous drugs, such as heroin, marijuana, and cocaine. Yet, diseases related to alcohol and tobacco kill approximately 500,000 Americans every year. We are losing the great drug war, because we do not now have, and never had, the capability to manage a successful war on any drug. Alcohol is a terrible drug because it incites people to violence. Today, approximately 9,000 murders and 23,000 drunken driving deaths (half the total of all murders and all drunken driving deaths) are related to alcohol use. We are losing the war on drugs because our leaders, especially those now in the Reagan administration, have declared all users of illicit drugs to be "the enemy." Thus, they refuse to distinguish between drug use, drug abuse, between responsible drug use and compulsive, addictive use. We are losing the drug war because it does not deal with the most important problems related to drugs: abuse, crime and corruption. Drug abusers (or drug addicts) need rehab and treatment. The intensifying war on drugs keeps these substances in the black market, which keeps prices high and creates the conditions in which violent traffickers flourish and criminal addicts feel driven to victimize their innocent neighbors. Much of this happened during alcohol prohibition. Today, however, addict crimes and profits for traffickers are much greater - and so are police and prosecutor corruptions.³⁵

To summarize, America is progressively losing the war on drugs. Nixon's drug policy was nothing more than law enforcement and it introduced a new twist that focused

³³ Sharp, *The Dilemma of the Drug Policy*, 61.

³⁴ Arnold S. Trebach, *The Great Drug War* (New York Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 2-3.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

on drug treatment, ordering immediate drug testing and rehab programs in Vietnam, and he making it mandatory before discharging addicts back into civilian life.³⁶ Sadly, “Nixon’s drug policies demobilized quickly, when he claimed that the nation had “turned the corner on drug addiction.”³⁷ Nixon’s message implied disengagement from the war on drugs.³⁸ “The funds for drug treatment and rehab began to decline after 1973, in absolute as well as inflation-adjusted dollars, and the budget for drug-law enforcement continued to increase.³⁹ It was obvious that his efforts were a ploy for reelection. The “drug war” today needs overhauling and politicians need to get serious about making policy that will prevent absolute drug trafficking.

From 1980-1992, the drug war has led to an increase of seventy five thousand women incarcerations in prisons in the United States. Regan attempted to halt drug import across the border, but claims it was impossible with borders like ours. He suggested that if America removes people away from the drugs and reduce the drug supply efforts, such as border interdiction and enforcement activities aimed at traffickers, would halt the border trafficking.⁴⁰

Regan’s drug war method promoted stiffer penalties for drug law offenders and gave the attorney general emergency powers to more easily categorize new drugs under schedule I- the most restrictive category of the existing drug law. It produced new drug laws such as forfeiture, which suggests that the drug traffickers should not be allowed to

³⁶ Sharp, *The Dilemma of the Drug Policy in the United States*, 27.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

enjoy the “ill-gotten gains” of their criminal activity, and should not be allowed to use such gains to purchase the best defense that drug money can buy. And, in 1984 the drug enforcement task force was in operation in 13 cities.⁴¹ Further, Regan’s war on drugs attacked drug users. He argued that “Drug use is not a victimless crime; it is not a private matter . . . we must demonstrate our great concern for the millions of innocent citizens who pay the high price for the illegal drug use of some.”⁴² Critics saw Regan’s drug policy as powerful symbolism in the sense that President Regan called upon the American public to join in a “national crusade” against drugs, a crusade that he claimed, must include a combination of government and private efforts which complement one another.⁴³

It is my belief, if political leaders really want to stop drugs in American, they must get to the root of the problem, starting with the producers and big drug dealers that invest in drugs for resale. If America starts at the root of the problem, then it will stop the branches on the tree from growing. American needs leaders that are serious about cleaning up drugs and establishing rehab and treatment facilities that will open its doors to drug abusers. The war on drugs has been, and is still, a deadly war on African Americans and a blatant failure of the system.

⁴¹ Sharp, *The Dilemma of the Drug Policy in the United States*, 49.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 56.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 54-55.

Another Chance for a Woman at the Well

In the section, I will explicate the text of the Samaritan woman in John 4: 4-19, drawing primarily on Leon Morris and Fred Craddock and then relate this story to the life of African American women who struggle with addictions. The text discloses a scenario in which Jews did not associate with Samaritans, and the laws of the Jewish culture prohibited men from speaking with woman in public.⁴⁴ However, when Jesus speaks with a Samaritan woman, it shocks the Jews because there is a long standing hatred among the two peoples. However, Jesus breaks this barrier. Jesus' encounter with the woman changes her life and the whole town comes to recognize Jesus as the Messiah.

The controlling image is "gifting." Jesus uses the image of a *free-gift* offered by God, which parallels to the *gift of free water* that Jesus asked of the women. Jesus proposes that the *free-gift* he offers is much greater than the woman's. He is speaking of spiritual water and the woman is speaking of literal water. The image of living water is evidence that he is more than a mere man, but the image is symbolic of eternal life. At the rhetorical level, the manner of exchange is dialogical, a dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan, and the primary form of the dialogue is a play on question-response. When he asked the woman for a drink of water, the woman questions: "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan, how can you ask me for a drink?" Jesus responds: "If you knew who is speaking to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water" (v.10).

⁴⁴ *Bible Exposition Commentary*, 1483.

In the narrative, Jesus departs Judea, the headquarters of the Jewish religious establishment, and travels by foot to Galilee, which is known as a heavily Gentile region. The Pharisees were upset with Jesus because he was gaining many disciples and his powerful testimony was gaining success. Jesus left the region and took a short route to Galilee in order to escape their design. He traveled by foot through Samaria and came to a town called Sychar. It was here that Jesus rests, hot and tired from his journey at about 12 noon, which is the hottest point of the day, Jesus rests near Jacob's well. As he rests, a woman came fetching water. It is this encounter that frames the dialogue.

Biblical scholar Leon Morris suggests that the Jews hated the Samaritans in principle and avoided all contact with them. When traveling from Galilee to Jerusalem, strict Jews would cross the Jordan River on the east side to enter Jerusalem and avoid the land of the Samaritans. The two peoples historically divided over rights of authenticity. Judah, to the South, thought it was superior to the Northern Kingdom of Israel because the one temple to worship God was located in their territory in Jerusalem. The Assyrians' military power destroyed the Northern Kingdom, Israel and scattered them to different parts of the empire. The Samaritans began to mingle and mix with other people from Babylon, Cuthan, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim and worshipped idol gods.⁴⁵ Shortly after, the Assyrian authority allowed an exile Israelite priest to introduce God to the Israelites. They only used the five books of Moses, and Jews saw their worship as impoverished.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Leon Morris, *Reflections on the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986), 121.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

According to Bible Exposition Commentary, Samaria was a direct route from Judea to Galilee, but few Jews ever took the direct route and often took a roundabout route. Fred Craddock suggests that the literary motif of the man of God meeting a woman at a well and asking for a drink is biblical and has the effect of setting the present story in continuity with biblical history. That Jesus was tired from a long journey is an indication of his humanity. The land plot of Jacob's well is symbolic of Israel, which Jacob gave to Joseph.⁴⁷ However, Morris suggests that Jesus had to go through Samaria because it was within his mission and not a necessity of his journey. This is an important point for understanding the women in the ANOTHER CHANCE ministry. I will return to it later.

Breaking Barriers

Verses 7-9: When the woman approached the well to draw water, Jesus was sitting by the well, tired, and he asked her for a drink. The disciples had gone into town to buy provisions, hence no man among his own to draw water. Morris asserts that it is a usual practice for women to draw water as a common chore. However, the time that she went to the well was unusual because it was the hottest time of the day and normally women drew water around sunset.⁴⁸ The woman may have chosen this hour because she could be sure that no others would be there drawing water, being a woman of a tarnished reputation and perhaps ostracized by the other women of her village.⁴⁹ The woman's

⁴⁷ Fred B. Craddock, *The People's New Testament Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 300.

⁴⁸ Morris, *Reflections on the Gospel of John*, 124.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

behavior signifies her as an outsider living inside of a prejudiced community, with all the stigma attached.

Woman: “How is it that you, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” Morris asserts that the woman knew Jesus was a Jew, maybe by his dress or the way he spoke. Further, it was ceremonially unclean for a Rabbi to drink from the same drinking vessel of a Samaritan. It would bring defilement to the person who made contact, and the individual could not participate in religious activities based on Jewish laws.⁵⁰ Therefore, for Jesus to ask this woman for a drink was absurd. Craddock says that despite the tension between the Jews and Samaritans, it is evident that Jesus is a Jew, claiming it is not a matter of racial characteristics because Samaritans are not ethnically distinguishable from Jews. Rather, it is a matter of religious cultic purity laws. Jews obeyed certain ritual prescriptions not observed by Samaritans (Mark 7; Acts 10).⁵¹

However, Morris asserts that Jesus is not subject to the prejudices of his times.⁵² He evokes Paul who says that: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male no female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal.3:28).”⁵³

Morris says:

He does not, of course mean that there is no difference between Jew and Greek, between slaves and free, between male and female. Of course there are differences. What he is saying is that these differences give us no ground for taking up an attitude of lofty

⁵⁰ Morris, *Reflections on the Gospel of John*, 125.

⁵¹ Craddock, *The People's New Testament Commentary*, 300.

⁵² Morris, *Reflections on the Gospel of John*, 27.

⁵³ Ibid.

superiority. Suggesting there is a unity in Christ that transcends all kinds of human barriers.⁵⁴

According to Morris, to be a Christian is to know that one is a sinner whose individual sins are no longer before them based on the cross event. This presupposes God's grace, which promotes a new way of living, thinking, talking and walking from his perspective. Morris goes on to say that racial prejudice is a sin and it erects barriers that are meaningless in a context where the complete human race needs salvation. If humanity understands the death of Jesus, all prejudices such as sexual, racial, economic and political have no place. The most ardent male chauvinist cannot claim more, both sexes were created with divine purpose and *not in competition* with one another. Nevertheless, both male and female belong together and each is impoverished without the other.⁵⁵

The Gifting

Verses 10-15: Jesus: "If you knew the "free gift of God" and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." Morris suggests that Jesus uses the words *free gift of God*, which denotes the Greek word (*dorea*) meaning a gift with an adverb *freely*, the manner of the gift. But Jesus does not explain what the free gift is. However, in view of the context, it seems likely that he means the living water of which: "The woman in her remote Samaritan village and with her inadequate knowledge of the ways of God knew nothing of the living water that God could give her. She was in danger of rejecting a good gift that she was not yet in a

⁵⁴ Morris, *Reflections on the Gospel of John*, 27.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 127.

position to evaluate.”⁵⁶ The Lord’s request was simply a way to open the conversation and share with her the truth about *living water*. Whenever he witnesses to people, Jesus did not use *sales talk*, which he adapts to meet every situation. To Nicodemus, he spoke about new birth and to this woman he speaks about *living water*. However, Jesus speaks of spiritual water, but the woman interprets it as literal water.

Woman: “Sir, you have no bucket and the well is deep; from where then do you have the living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as well as his son and his livestock?” Still, she is interested enough to continue the conversation. The Bible Exposition Commentary suggests that the woman was ignorant of three important facts: Who he was, What he had to offer, and How she could receive it. Morris says that the woman was standing in God’s presence, but did not realize it.⁵⁷ Hence, many human beings fail to recognize Jesus when he comes in ways least expected through addicts, homeless and poverty stricken persons.

Jesus: “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. The water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” Morris assumes that Jesus is talking about flowing water or water in motion as opposed to stagnant water. He was speaking of *living water* needed to cleanse ones body from defilement. Further, the expression *living water* is found in the Old Testament in Proverbs 18:4, “The words of a man’s mouth are deep waters, but the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook,” which suggests the teaching of wisdom is a fountain of life. Water is a natural symbol of what is

⁵⁶ Morris, *Reflections on the Gospel of John*, 130.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

invigorating and refreshing. Nevertheless, many passages associate *living water* closely with God such as Jeremiah (2:13; 17:13), which speaks of him as the spring of *living water*, and the psalmist prays, with you is *the fountain of life* (Ps. 36:9). Additionally, Ezekiel's vision suggests that there is the mighty stream that flows from the temple. Several passages assert that God is the *living water* that never runs dry.⁵⁸

Craddock speaks literally of the living water as running, flowing water, as opposed to stagnant water. Here the deeper meaning is *water that gives life, true eternal life*. In the Old Testament and Judaism, the symbol of living water is repeatedly symbolic of God himself and the salvation he gives (Jer. 2:13; 17:13; Ezek. 47:1-8). John asserts that the living water is Jesus himself, mediated by the Spirit (7:37-39).⁵⁹ This concurs with the scripture: "Rivers of living of water will flow from his innermost being," referring to the gift of the Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39). Subsequently, the water that Jesus offers is everlasting but the water in the cistern will run dry.⁶⁰

Morris suggests that the woman did not realize the type of water Jesus was speaking about, however, the water from the well gave her no permanent satisfaction. Therefore, she returned for more.⁶¹ In the phrase, "Everyone who drinks of this water" (v.13), the verb is in the present tense and depicts continuous action that goes on and on. But in the phrase, "Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him (v. 14), the verb is in the aorist subjective, which means a once and for all, a decisive event."

⁵⁸ Morris, *Reflections on the Gospel of John*, 131.

⁵⁹ Craddock, *The People's New Testament Commentary*, 300.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Morris, *Reflections on the Gospel of John*, 133.

Morris asserts:

When anyone comes face to face with Christ and, abandoning an old way of life, turns to him for salvation, for the 'living water' that he alone can give, then something permanent has happened. That person has entered into an experience from which she will never want to go back. He has drunk of the water that is permanently satisfying.⁶²

Woman: "Sir, give me this water that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

The woman asks for a gift of which she has no knowledge. The only way to prepare her for the reception of the gift was by confession. He tells her to go get her husband, which forced her to admit her sin. She protests: "Where do you get that living water? You are not greater than Jacob, are you?" Since Jesus has no visible means with which to draw water, the woman's question seems to imply that only a miracle similar to the one attributed to Jacob at Haran could produce water. Therefore, the woman responded by challenging Jesus ability to match the gift of the great forebears of faith.⁶³

The Spirit of Truth

Verses 16-19: Jesus: "Go, call your husband and come here." Woman: "I have no husband." This is the shortest answer of the entire conversation. Morris asserts that Jesus had the opportunity to bring home her sins and the importance of doing something about them. Jesus' gift of living water is for all to enjoy and share with others and this is when Jesus asked about her husbands. Craddock, however, suggests that Jesus' statement was an example of his divine knowledge. He knows the woman's life, but does not condemn

⁶² Morris, *Reflections on the Gospel of John*, 135.

⁶³ *The New Interpreter's Bible*: Volume IX (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 566.

her (8:11).⁶⁴ Jesus: “You have well said, ‘I have no husband, for you have five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.’”

According to the New Interpreter’s Bible, the text is not about the woman as a sinner. Jesus does not judge her. Instead, he extends an invitation to her. There are many possible reasons for a marital history other than moral laxity. Perhaps the woman, like Tamar in (Genesis 38) is trapped in the custom of levirate marriage (Deut. 25:5-10; Luke 20:27- 33), and the last male in the family line has refused to marry her. Morris presupposes that the woman was an expert in divorce, which may have been a custom of her culture. However, according to the Law of Moses, a man could divorce his wife, but a woman could not divorce her husband. Theoretically, the number of valid marriages anyone could contract had no limits, but the rabbis thought that a nice girl would not have more than two husbands or three at the most. Further, Jesus meant that the woman had more husbands than the allowable, which was illegal and the woman may not have married at all.⁶⁵

The disclosure opens a new possibility in the dialogical relation. Woman: “Sir, I see that you are a prophet.” Craddock suggests that this is an example of Jesus divine knowledge. He is like God, who does not look on the outward appearance, but knows our hearts (1:48-50; 2:24-25; 4:29; 6:64). Jesus knew her past and did not condemn her. Disdained by her own, Jesus accepts her and she spreads the good news.⁶⁶ Here, Morris is insightful:

⁶⁴ Craddock, *The People’s New Testament Commentary*, 300.

⁶⁵ Morris, *Reflections on the Gospel of John*, 138.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

The Samaritan woman was an ordinary person with no outstanding achievements or potentials. Jesus does not always choose outstanding people to accomplish his mission; many of his miracles of grace are work in what the world would count as very unpromising people. Jesus' gift of living water is not a reward for meritorious service. The gift of living water is for anyone who accepts it no matter how insignificant and limited he or she may be, for a new experience, a new power, and a new life-eternal life.⁶⁷

To summarize, the story of the Samaritan woman is a reflection of what many African American women experience in their communities on a daily basis. Many black women turn to drugs as coping devices to deal with life problems of abandonment, racism, sexism, and injustice created by the systems of the world. Most systems such as the courts, education, job, political, welfare, and some churches are not set up to make African American women whole, strong or successful citizens. Rather, they are set up to empower the rich by capitalizing on the poor, which is oppressing and degrading.

The Samaritan woman may have felt helpless and hopeless and the reason she went to the well to draw water in the noon of the day. This was an unusual time for women to be at the well. It may be out of her sense of shame, guilt and lifestyle and knowing that the other women of her village would not be present that she went at that serendipitous time. She is shunned by her community, and depends on men to help take care of her welfare. This communicates to women who use drugs as coping devices to combat life challenges. However, something happen that day in the woman's life. She experienced a bizarre encounter with a man whom she did not know or understand. He offered the gift of God, living water. She did not realize what the living water was, but in

⁶⁷ Morris, *Reflections on the Gospel of John*, 136.

dialogue with Jesus, the woman accepted the living water, and hence, she accepted another chance for a new life, salvation and forgiveness.

The story resonates with the women in the ANOTHR CHANCE program. When they turned to God, they found him to be the main reason they are no longer abusers of drugs and the source that provided them strength and courage for total transformation. Repentance was requisite for this transformation, and this suggests the reason God questioned the Samaritan about her husbands, so that she would recognize her own sin. Knowing her lifestyle, God did not condemn her, but renewed her with hope, love, forgiveness, and restored her to society.

The Womanist Challenge

The previous section treated the empirical and theoretical foundations of this project as well as the biblical. In this section, I look at the theological support for this project namely, Womanist Theology. Many people of various cultural backgrounds speak “God-talk” whether by the drug abuser, the prostitute, the abandon one, the atheist, or the preacher. Regardless of ones reasons for calling on God, God is powerful in the lives of many people in the quest for freedom, deliverance, healing, forgiveness and love. Womanist Theology is contextual theology and begins by considering the revelation of God in the lives of Black folks historically and particularly in the lives of ordinary women of African descent.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, “Womanist theologians have described God as

⁶⁸ Emilie M. Townes, *Embracing the Spirit* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), 122.

a God of liberation, survival and resistance against evil.”⁶⁹ Delores Williams defines

Womanist theology thus:

Womanist theology attempts to help black women see, affirm and have confidence in the importance of their experience and faith for determining the character of the Christian religion in the African-American community. Womanist theology challenges all oppressive forces impeding black women’s struggle for survival for the development of a positive, productive quality of life conducive to women’s and the family’s freedom and well-being. Womanist theology opposes all oppression based on race, sex, class, sexual preference, physical disability and caste.⁷⁰

I will explore the Black church perspective on how it deals with women’s suffering from the internal knot of drug abuse. Andrew Sung Park says, “When people’s deep wounds are not healed, the wounds become vortexes of troubled water, intertwined with their own instinct of survival and fear.”⁷¹ Many women have been incarcerated because of their internal knots of pain that stemmed from systems of education, courts, foster care, juvenile institutions, prisons and dysfunctional families. Many women have given up in their attempts to survive in a society where systems discourage the normal lifestyle for prosperity. Additionally, many have turned to drugs to survive the course of life’s agony. Park says: “In this world of violence, the church must address the issue of these deep wounds (hans) and the issue of sin, if the church wants to be relevant and effective in transforming and healing the world.”⁷²

⁶⁹ Townes, *Embracing the Spirit*, 125.

⁷⁰ Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005), xiv.

⁷¹ Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 3.

⁷² Ibid.

Today, many African American women feel that the church is not equipped to deal with the relevant issues that lead to destruction and they feel alienated from the church. They turn to any means necessary for survival, whether drugs, prostitution, drug dealers, or stealing. If the Black church is to be a beacon light in the community, it is challenge to set up ministries that speak to racism, sexism, drug abuse and community problems. The Black church must reach out and operate with compassion as a social institution for the sick (addicts and mentally ill), the lost (unsaved and backslidden), downtrodden (demoralized, oppressed and exploited), and the suffering. The Black church must be a reflection of God's peace, love, guidance, comfort, and hope. The Black church has always been the headquarters in the black community to combat problems of racism, discrimination, political and civil rights. C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H.

Mamiya assert that:

The black religious phenomena experiential dimension gave rise to the social institutions called the churches, which consist of encounters with human beings with the sacred or divine. The black sacred cosmos is the religious worldview of African Americans. Therefore, religion is a social phenomenon, a shared group experience that has shaped and influenced the cultural screens of human communication and interpretation. Henry Mitchell, James Cone, and Gayraud Wilmore all agreed that throughout black religious history the reality of Jesus as the Son of God made flesh finds a deep response in black faith and worship. The experience of oppression is more likely to find immediate resonance with the incarnation view of the suffering, humiliation, death, and eventual triumph of Jesus in the resurrection, than with an abstract concept of an impersonal God. Likewise, a major aspect of black Christian belief is symbolic importance given to the word "freedom." Throughout black history, the term "freedom" has deep religious resonances in the lives and hopes of African Americans. During slavery it meant release from bondage; after emancipation it meant the right to be educated, to be employed, and to move about freely

from place to place, and in the twentieth century freedom means, social, political, and economic justice.⁷³

Womanist theologians speak to the plights of women who need deliverance, healing and hope and express the challenges of the African American Women. Womanist Theology surfaced in 1979 in an article written by Jacquelyn Grant "Black Theology and Black Women."⁷⁴ Likewise, Delores Williams wrote the first text specifically using the term in, "*Womanist Theology: Black Women's Voices*," appeared in March 1987, edition of "*Christianity and Crisis*."⁷⁵ Womanist Theology asserts that there is a unique relation between God and Black women. The fight is against discrimination, racism and sexism. Williams' theology proposes that instead of the exodus model, supported by Black male theologians and most Womanist religious scholars, she speaks provocatively of the wilderness imagery as most representative of American black women's reality. Therefore, instead of believing in liberation as the key, Williams suggests that survival and a productive quality of life represent the central thread in Womanist theology and ethics.⁷⁶ However, when it comes to the plight of the Samaritan woman, Williams is not the most promising for deliverance, freedom and hope, because she sees no liberative power in the cross-event of Jesus Christ, which is for her a symbol of bondage. It effectively supports suffering, oppression and exploitation, which is dis-empowering for suffering women. Further, she argues that to glorify the cross as liberation is to glorify

⁷³ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 2.

⁷⁴ Dwight N. Hopkins, *Introducing Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005), 131.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁷⁶ Hopkins, *Introducing Black Theology of Liberation*, 146.

suffering and render exploitation sacred. Based on this Christology, it encourages Black women to accept suffering.⁷⁷

However, I hold that Alice Walker better serves the thought of many drug abusers in the sense of hope for deliverance that abides in the power of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁸ Walker defines the term Womanist as one that loves the Spirit. She suggests that the “Spirit is a healing, reviving source of positive power that gives new insight, courage, endurance and meaning in the midst of the trials and tribulations of life.”⁷⁹ Walker suggests that God is evoked in opening prayer to send the Holy Spirit to bless the service, the pastor, the speaker and so on. To understand this, we must first understand the order of the Godhead. The Godhead consists of the God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. God is three in one. God is the head that manifest himself through the Son and the Holy Spirit, who is as a comforter, counselor, protector, healer and so on. Therefore, God is the sole decision maker. Walker suggests “Black women rejoice in being touch by or moved by the Spirit.”⁸⁰ The women in the ANOTHER CHANCE program claim God as the source for their sobriety. Although the drug abuser attempted to quit drugs and alcohol, failure haunted them daily. It was not until they experience the unction of the Spirit that they sought change.

Many women drug abusers are depressed and oppressed for different reasons and feel like outcast of their society, which suggest a need of a theological story to help

⁷⁷ Emilie M. Townes, *Embracing the Spirit* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2003), 133.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

support them in their struggle for change. The story of the Samaritan woman suggests a story of liberation, forgiveness and hope through Jesus Christ who restores her life. The woman was an outcast in her community viewed as chattel of a lower-class and a sinner, because she had five husbands. Samaritans were gentiles who received no respect from the orthodox Jews. The plight of black women consists of subjection to the oppressor, racism, sexism, and rejection as second-class citizens. Williams says, "During slavery, women were mated with any male the slave holder chose so that the women could birth children every twelve months, and the children became property of the slave holder."⁸¹ The Samaritan woman was a victim of abuse based upon her society, which includes physical (by husbands), psychological (mental and emotional), sociopolitical (government), and may have had all the husbands, not by chose, but by tradition and lived in Samaria by exile. In support of this statement Cheryl Gilkes argues that "African American women experience multiple jeopardizes that permit them to see the dominant controlling systems for what it is."⁸²

In America when the Civil Rights Act of 1966, was signed as amendment to the law, minor changes began to surface. However, too many African American women are still waiting for liberation from the shackles of drugs, poverty, homelessness, and remain outcasts of their community. Linda Thomas speaks to their plight using the term, "Ubuntu," which is a term used in Black South Africa to express what it means to be a full human being in the context of community. "Ubuntu" became clear to her as Black peoples' action displayed defiance against the brutal system of apartheid that violated

⁸¹ Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, 82.

⁸² Townes, *Embracing the Spirit*, 56.

them daily. They experienced the effects of more than three centuries of tragic usurpation of structural power by whites. Black South African used the concept of Ubuntu to claim their “people hood” despite the wilderness experience that began in 1652.”⁸³

Institutional racism is an on going struggle in our court systems and is proven by the population of blacks in the jails and prisons of the United States. The race card is played when decisions of welfare are made for the less fortunate and black American women who are outcast of their community. Roadblocks are prevalent in the systems that set standards and laws for society to follow. Blacks are made to abide by the law, while white Americans are forgiven of their wrongs, unless a heinous crime is committed. Ironically, Black American women are still coping with Jim Crow laws (racism) that never claimed equality.

The Samaritan recognized that Jesus was of another culture because of his attire, and Jesus conversation with the women was against the Jewish law. She met a man about whom she knew nothing, but her encounter sparked a light in her life. Jesus was not looking for a bride, but for a witness in Samaria. In dialogue, she came to realize that one with whom she was speaking was indeed a prophet and deliverer that broke the barriers between the Jews and Samaritans, forgave her sins, and restored her life from the plight of her society. This narrative brings hope and relief to the oppressed, sin-sick and downtrodden persons and proves that God forgives sin and restore life to anyone who accepts his gift. Many women get off track of living a moral life for different reasons and veer into unfamiliar territory, leading to self-destruction. Jesus extends his gift the *living water* as an opportunity to come out of the wilderness. Many black women have

⁸³ Townes, *Embracing the Spirit*, 54 -55.

experienced unpredictable storms in their life and the Samaritan woman's story sheds God's light of hope, comfort, solace and refuge to those living in a dark world.

Summary

The Black Church, Social and Civic Empowerment is concerned with social ethics, which suggests a concern for communal moral principles. The Black Church is a powerful entity in the Black Community, and history reveals that it has been a place of rest and protest, a place where conferences and other important events have taken place for the advancement of the oppressed, downtrodden, and less fortunate. Additionally, the church is a place where education, knowledge, wisdom and spiritual growth commence for the African American race. Hence, it empowers people as well as leaders and pastors to gain insight on available services through civil and non-profit organization. This focus group provides models to empower leaders to combat social problems that invade our communities, such as recidivism of African American women, homelessness, drugs, unemployment, housing, HIV/AIDS and self destruction among African Americans.

According to Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, "The church must take seriously its prophetic role in regard to women's self-esteem. Drug abuse, violence, and teenager pregnancy are all related to issues of low self-esteem."⁸⁴ If the church is erected as one of God's kingdom, it must reflect the vibrant work of the Lord. God called the church to reach out into the community and highways to make a difference in a sin sick world. It is

⁸⁴ Gilkes, *If It Wasn't For The Women*, 208.

a command that all churches are to stand up and speak out against racism and injustice.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere!"⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Janet Cheatham Bell, *Famous Black Quotations* (New York: Warner Books, 1995), 9.

CHAPTER THREE

ANOTHER CHANCE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

A major focus of ministry at the Bread of Life Cathedral is the ANOTHER CHANCE ministry for combating recidivism among African American women within Clarksville, TN. The focus for this ministry was derived from my spiritual journey, which was formed by my experience with siblings who throughout their lifetime struggled with drug and alcohol addictions. It is also drawn from my own career in criminal justice having worked with incarcerated African American women. However my connection with the Renewal House, a non-profit counseling agency focused on the recidivism of incarcerated women and their special needs, provided me with access to a set of residents whose life stories were graciously shared with me through interviews I conducted at Renewal House and whose prospects for life change has been empowered by their experience with the Renewal House program. These sources for the context of this ministry were the topic of Chapter One.

Chapter Two focused on the critical theoretical, biblical, theological and empirical literature dealing with the Christian response to recidivism among African American women. Based on the literature explored in Chapter Two, many women are victims of the war on drugs, its production and consumption within society that results in their low-self esteem, anger, and feelings of abandonment. It was argued by Peter J. Paris that persons relate to their sociopolitical context as wholes and cannot exist apart from one

another. He further suggests that if particular social groups stand in opposition to the basics societal values, they threaten the social order. This disequilibrium renders them alienated from social values that promote their welfare. This point is central to my reading of the Samaritan woman, Womanist Theology, and is supported by the empirical literature on recidivism among African American women.

The empirical literature shows that the “war on drugs” has been an on going fight in the wrong direction, leading to increase incarceration of African American women. A summary of the statistics, from Chapter Two, shows that during the 1980s and 90s, the number of women entering the criminal justice system increased and incarcerations tripled to a total of seventy-five thousand. The FBI suggests that from 1982 to 1991 the number of women arrested for drug offenses increased by 89 %.¹ In 1990, the National Institute on Justice found that 63% of women nationally were illicit drug users. Another survey by American Correctional Association in 1990, found that half of the women in prison used cocaine and another 20% used heroin daily. Drugs have ruined the lives of many people, especially African American women, and the reason for many divorces that separates numerous children from their parents. Such stats also suggest that programs to combat recidivism among women, especially African American women, are necessary. The Renewal House has been a non-church successful model. The goal of this study to implement a model within the ministry of the Bread of Life Cathedral to work in partnership with non-church based models in combating recidivism among African American women from within a spiritual center of empowerment. The ministry is to

¹Stephen R. Kandall, *Substance And Shadow* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 252.

address the pain and suffering of these women and provide spiritual empowerment to these women, enabling their wholeness and re-introduction into healthy social relations.

This chapter explains the research design deployed in examining the feasibility of the project. The research design was based on interviews with three African American women who were residents in the Renewal House (discussed in Chapter One). I chose this method based on a questionnaire, interviews, and verbatims.² I chose this method in order to collect data from participants and learn from them what was most helpful in empowering them toward life change in their struggles with recidivism. The data that emerge from the interviews is descriptive and focuses on the participant's words, perceptions (insight) and experiences, and the ways they make sense of their lives. I found this method to be most effective in getting a handle of the personal and social realities of the participants in order to determine in what ways Bread of Life Cathedral can construct a ministry that might achieve such results as expressed by the women in these interviews.³ The title for my project is: "ANOTHER CHANCE: COMBATING RECIDIVISM AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN." The mission of the project is to empower the lives of women at risk of recidivism toward a productive and drug free life.

Procedure

I conducted interviews at the Renewal House in Nashville, Tennessee. On November 15, 2005, I contacted the director to set-up an appointment to meet with some

² John Creswell, *Research Design Qualitative, Quantative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (London: Sage Publications, 2003) 15.

³ John W. Creswell, *Research Design* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication, 2003) 199.

of the residents. On November 17, I met with approximately twenty women of different ethnic backgrounds during their life skills meeting. I also talked extensively with the director and the vocational coordinator. After introducing myself and explaining my purpose for being there, I was given permission to invite women in the program to participate in interviews. I informed the women that a confidentiality statement must be signed before one can participate and that their names would be anonymous if used in the study. All twenty women wanted to participate. However, five were initially interviewed but only three were chosen for this project.

On December 5, 2005, I contacted the Renewal House by phone to set-up interviews with five African American women, residents of the facility. The variables controlling the interviews were: race, age, class, marital status, employment or previous work history, and religious affiliation. While five interviews were done, only three are used on this study only for the sake of limiting the scope of the final project. In selecting these women, their 10 year age differential (28, 38 and 48) was used to test whether age would make a difference in how these women coped with their internal knots of abandonment, depression and dysfunctional families. Critical for my purposes was that each woman believed in a higher power as a source of their empowerment.

Ms. A. is a 48-year-old African American. She is a single parent (never married) of a son who is 10 years old. She identifies herself as being Pentecostal and has a 9th grade education. She is a welfare recipient, and a former waitress. Ms. B. is a 38-year-old African American woman and a resident of Renewal House. Like Ms. A., she is also a single parent but has two sons, ages 8 and 12 years old. Ms. B. has an 11th grade education and identifies her previous employment as a “dealer.” She is a Baptist by

religious affiliation. The third participant is Ms. C. She is a 28 years old resident of Renewal House. Also like Ms. B. she has two sons, ages 5 and 8. However, she identifies her marital status as separated. Unlike Ms. A. and B. Ms. C. was a college student who dropped out in her second year. Also unlike Ms. A. and B. she is not a welfare recipient but is apparently supported by her spouse, who is a factory worker. Like Ms. B., Ms. C. is a Baptist by religious affiliation.

The Interviews

The interviews began on December 8, 2005, lasting about 45 minutes per participant. They were held behind closed doors to assure privacy and promote an atmosphere of confidentiality. I greeted each participant warmly, hoping to not mimic the sterile and regimental manner in which clients are usually handled by caseworkers. I advised each participant to sign the Confidentiality Statement and I reminded each that her name would be anonymous in the final project. The interviews started with a brief statement of purpose after which I advised the women to relax and be honest with their answers, and if they had any questions, I would be glad to answer them. A questionnaire was then administered.

First Interview: Ms. A.

Question: How did you come to know about this program?

Answer: I asked my aunt about a place, because I was looking for a rehabilitation place. I came here from Chicago to get away from the life of selling drugs and I started using drugs like crack, cocaine, P.C.P., alcohol, speed and Mary Jane.

Question: What are the causes of your addiction?

Answer: My addictions were caused by many things like loneliness, feeling abandon and unwanted by my grandmother. My mother died when I was three (3) years old. I guess my grandmother tried to give me love, but I wanted my parents love. I wanted my dad's love and attention, because he wanted a boy, a son, so I tried to be a boy, but my dad still did not show me any love. He never paid child support and he was incarcerated a few times. He married a lady with seven children, and I was angry with him and later my father died in 1986.

Question: Why did you come to this program?

Answer: I came to give my son and myself a new chance in life.

Question: What is the highest-educational level you completed in school?

Answer: I completed the 9th graded, dropped out in the second semester of the 10th grade.

Question: How do you think this program has benefited you up to this point?

Answer: This program has allowed me to look at myself and allowed me to feel and know what it means to cry, because I did not allow my self to cry, it made me feel weak. Also, I learned how to deal with my feelings of life - like depression, crying, stress, and how to trust people. I did not allow anyone to get close to me and I did not get close with people.

Question: What are you hoping to accomplish through this program?

Answer: I hope to learn how to deal with "life on life terms" and how accept people the way they are, and things I have no control over concerning people thoughts, wants and needs.

Question: Are you affiliated with a religion? If so, what faith tradition?

Answer: Yes, Pentecostal. I joined Cathedral of Praise three weeks ago.

Question: What offenses were you convicted and incarcerated?

Answer: For possession of a controlled substance with intent to delivery. I sold drugs to support my habit, which was four hundred dollars a day. When I ran out of money, I had phone sex, cleaned houses, prostituted, and sold goods out of my house. Also I worked on cars and have auto mechanic skills.

Question: Are you a repeated offender? If so, for what offenses?

Answer: Yes, the same things, possession of a controlled substance with intent to delivery.

Question: What are the greatest challenges you have confronted in this program?

Answer: Trust is one of the greatest challenges, and ninety days in this place is the hardest first stage of recovery, because your body becomes alive. You deal with it by talking with staff members, residents, and they tell you it is going to be OK, because they went through it.

Question: What does it take (mentally) to get through this program?

Answer: It takes being open minded, willingness, determination and most of all a "higher power," God to make it through to recovery. I was raised in the church and that really helped me.

Question: What are your plans after completion of this program?

Answer: I plan to get a good job, like a radio dispatcher, a nice apartment or a home and continue my education. Most of all to remain drug and alcohol free, and want my son to have a better life.

Question: Would you recommend this program for other fellow offenders? If so, why? If not, why?

Answer: Yes! This program has a lot of structure and it teaches independence so that you can do things for yourself. In addition, it teaches one how to deal with life and other peoples attitudes.

Question: Is there anything about this program that you would add or change?

Answer: Yes, I wish there were more activities for the children and we need more shopping time, there is not enough time to select healthy foods and keep your budget in control.

Second Interview: Ms. B.

Q. How did you come to know about this program?

A. I was in Memphis in a treatment facility and read about it in a magazine, and I inquired about the program and began September 12, 2005.

Q. What caused your addiction?

A. My friends sold drugs and introduced me to it and I became interested in it. I tried it when I was seventeen years old and have used it continuously for twenty years.

Q. Why did you come to this program?

A. I needed help, because I was not paying my bills, I was buying crack cocaine.

Q. How do you think this program has benefited you up to this point?

A. It has taught me how to get along with others, and it gave me something to look forward to and it has saved my life.

Q. How has it saved your life?

A. I would have been dead or in jail for life.

Q. What are you hoping to accomplish through this program?

A. I hope I learn how to stay drug free, how to gain material things and it has taught me how to get back on track in life, learning how to live again, and function in society with a job, home and good health.

Q. Are you affiliated with a religion? If so, what faith tradition?

A. Yes, Baptist. I accepted the Lord as my Savior at the age of 12, but have not been to church in a long time.

Q. What offenses were you convicted and incarcerated for?

A. Convicted of possession of drugs for resale.

Q. Are you are a repeated offender? If so, for what offenses?

A. Yes, I am a repeated offender, for the same offenses.

Q. What are the greatest challenges you have confronted in this program?

A. Getting up in the morning dealing with self and other people and their children, but it has helped me overcome my shyness.

Q. What does it take (mentally) to get through this program?

A. It takes a high power—God. Life is hard, and it takes determination, perseverance, and willingness to get out.

Q. What are your dreams after completing this program?

A. I want to help other addicts become clean, and I want to own my business and raise my children.

Q. Is there any thing about this program that you would like to add or change?

A. Yes, there needs to be a T.V. in the rooms for children. Some groups are not set-up for what they are to be. Relapse should not be taught in parenting classes,

parenting should only be taught in parenting classes and relapse should only be taught in addiction groups.

Third Interview: Ms. C.

Q. How did you come to know about this program?

A. I learned about this program from my aunt who worked in the system.

Q. How long have you been in this program?

A. I have been in this program seven months.

Q. Why did you come to this program?

A. I wanted to get off drugs like crack, cocaine, and methamphetamine.

Q. How has this program benefited you thus far?

A. It has helped me see myself, because I blamed the world as the reason for my addiction. I was in denial of being an abuser of drugs for years.

Q. What are you hoping to accomplish from this program?

A. How to maintain sobriety and everything else will fall in place.

Q. What offenses were you convicted and incarcerated?

A. Violation of probation, I failed two drug test, and was also charged with theft of property over five hundred dollars.

Q. Are you a repeated offender?

A. Yes, for drugs and theft to support my habit.

Q. What are the greatest challenges you have confronted in this program?

A. I do not like authority and having to humble myself and learning how to deal with people, I am a loner.

Q. What does it take (mentally) to get through this program?

A. It takes determination, respect, responsibility, spiritual connection and a desire for continuous development and honesty.

Q. What are your dreams after completion of this program?

A. I dream to own my home and art studio and have a perfect family. I plan on getting a divorce and looking for a man to fill the place of a father for my children. I want to do the mother and wife things of life, like taking my children to the park, play games, go to the movies and church.

Q. Would you recommend this program to fellow offenders?

A. Yes, because it gives people another chance in life to start over with themselves and God.

Q. Is there anything about this program that you would add or change?

A. Yes, it needs a bigger playground for children and more things for them to do. Most of all let people chose the church they want to attend, instead of the one they have listed.

Summary

In summary, it was clear from my interviews with these three women that each suffered from many of the same problems and used drugs as a coping device. Ms. A said that her addictions were caused by many things like loneliness, and feeling abandon, unwanted by my grandmother, and her father showed her no love or attention. Ms. B said she used drugs because her friends introduced her to drugs and she tried it, and became interested in it at the age of seventeen. Ms. C claims that life problems drove her to drug abuse. The thought of a second chance seemed to be a powerful term in dealing with their addictions. Ms. A said she came to this program to give her son and herself a new chance

in life. Ms. B said she came to this program because she needed help and was not paying her bills but buying crack/cocaine. She would recommend this program to other offenders because it saved her life. Ms. C said she would recommend this program to other offenders because it gives people another chance in life to start over and a new start with God.

All three residents said that it takes a higher power, God, along with determination and respect for self and others to make it through the program. Ms. A and B said it takes most of all a higher power to make it through to recovery. Ms. C puts it this way: "It takes a spiritual connection and a desire for continuous development and honesty." In the following chapter, I will discuss what I have learned from my contact with these residents in Renewal House in order to implement the ANOTHER CHANCE program at the Bread of life Cathedral that will replicate the kinds of outcomes that Renewal House held for these three women in combating their recidivism.

CHAPTER FOUR

IMPLEMENTING ANOTHER CHANCE

Chapter One provided the basis for this ministry and analyzes the factors that influence the problem of recidivism among African American women. The synergy relates the personal interests, characteristics, and contexts of the author and her subjects and leads to an action research method to develop the ministry project. Chapter Two discussed the critical foundations of this ministry and focuses on empirical, biblical, and theological literatures that support the project. Chapter Three focused on the research design for this model of ministry. In this chapter, I describe the implementation of the *ANOTHER CHANCE* program. The purpose of this program is to combat recidivism among African American women due to drug and alcohol addictions. The essential components of this program are as follows:

1. Location/Time
2. Life Experience
3. Prayer/Fasting
4. Volunteerism
5. Church Attendance
6. Education
7. Counseling
8. Communication
9. Schedule

These are the essential components of the ANOTHER CHANCE program, which empowers individuals to triumph over their addictions and to live successfully with an “*I can do it attitude.*”

Essential Components of Another Chance

In this section, I explicate the essential components of the ANOTEHR CHANCE program and delineate the rationale of for each component.

Location/Time

The location is in a beauty shop named Anointed Creations. It is where many narratives and conversations are spoken among African American women. The women tell their stories and find hope through other testimonies of how they have survived their hurts, disappointments, and shame. These women can relate to each other and feel a sense of belonging instead of feelings like outcasts, as society would label them. In addition, time is very important in the sense of “making this time, worth your time.” In other words, one should not waste time, individuals learn that time is valuable and should be used wisely. Using time wisely suggests being productive and progressive toward improving one’s life through education, work, studying the Word and practicing living beyond the past.

Life Experience

This component is based on real life experiences that the women daily encounter. Here women and men come together to share their life experiences in a group setting among other people from various backgrounds. They unveil their narratives and give

testimonies of hope, deliverance and freedom. The different backgrounds encompass drug dealers, drug abusers, prostitutes and gays that are searching for hope, love and forgiveness. They relate to each other in finding ways to combat disappointment, pain, abuse and social problems of sexism, racism, and classicism. The Bible, God or a Higher Power, self help and other materials are sources to help participants find hope, deliverance, peace of mind, coping skills, and freedom to live according to God's will.

Prayer/Fasting/Volunteerism

Prayer is an essential line of communication to the source—God or a Higher Being. Prayer is powerful only if one uses it. The Bible reveals that “*the prayer of the righteous avails much*,” and whatever one ask for in prayer they will receive it (John 16:23, 24). This suggests that prayer is an apparatus that can be used for many reasons: to ask God for help, make better decisions in life, overcome temptations, defeat worry/adversary, and help individuals remain focus and so on. On the other hand, fasting is a ritual of abstaining from food to promote cleanliness of the body, mind, heart and soul, and to bring participants into a close relationship with God. Fasting was practice in the Old and New Testaments for spiritual discipline, consecration of the priests, believers, and utensils (Ex.30: 25-30; Matt. 6:16-18).

Volunteerism literally suggests that participants freely give service to others. This is essential from a Christian's perspective because the Bible suggests that we are to give God a tenth of our substances. When we give a tenth, money is not the only source one has to give, but our time, talents and gifts are also part of the tenth (Mal. 3:10). Volunteerism helps participants to understand what it means to share and love persons who do not look like them or behave differently from them. In addition, it teaches

individuals unselfishness, compassion and to think highly of others (Mark 12:29-31).

Finally, volunteerism promotes good Christian character and good behavior.

Church Attendance

Attending church services is important for fellowship and friendship to develop Christian relationships with others. This builds a Christian family that helps encourage, support and offers love for Christian growth. Furthermore, the church (building) is a place where worship and praise are practiced to magnify the Lord and usher in the Holy Spirit. With many participants, the power of the Holy Spirit is experienced as a *supernatural spiritual high*. Church attendance gives participants a sense of belonging to a family and promotes a sense of unity. Bread of Life Cathedral's maxim is this: *A church with a big heart of love for God and all people.*

Education

Education is an essential tool for successful living. bell hooks says that learning is liberatory and a practice for freedom. Further, she suggests that teaching paradigms must shift in the way we think, write, and speak, and the engaged voice must never be fixed and absolute but always changing, always evolving in dialogue with a world beyond itself.¹ This suggests that knowledge is power and progressive in accomplishing freedom from bondage. In learning, the women share their testimonies and narratives, and use coping skills to combat relapse and live in freedom. In addition, women are encouraged to read Bible stories that bring hope and peace to their life experience, and read other

¹ bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge Publishing, 1994), 11.

books of triumph over tragedy. Furthermore, relevant sermons promote transformation and empower individuals toward successful living.

Counseling

Counseling is administered on a one to one basis as needed and by appointments.

The source used for counseling is Edward P. Wimberly, *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling*.² A portion of Wimberly's model will be use in support of Another Chance program.

Step one - Pertinent information is collected from the counselee, and the story surrounding the presenting problem. Then personal History is established of personal family relationships, education, health, vocation, sexual relationships, and religion as they relate to the presenting problem. Step two - involves attending to the personal, martial, or family mythology that surrounds the presenting problem. Step three - identifies the personal, martial and family at work in the counselee and call them to attention. Step four - views the impact the mythologies have on the counselee's life and how they have informed the counselee's responses to the presenting problem. Step five - the counselee is offered a Bible story that relates to her story that can facilitate healing, peace and free for the mind, heart and spirit. Step six - offer goals that would be helpful for change in behavior and thinking. Step seven - begins the actual re-authoring of the story that dominate and frustrate the counselee's life. Reviewing how the Bible Story has been effective on the mythology, for change in the counselee' life.³

These steps are tools for transformation of ones mind, heart and spirit to live a life of sobriety.

² Edward P. Wimberly, *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 11.

³ Ibid., 11-12.

Communication

In order to prevent tragedy before it happens in case participants have a strong desire to incur bodily harm to self or relapse, members are available for their immediate attention. Two members are designated to be on call and contact the women monthly for moral support. If a participant shows signs of self-inflicted harm, the pastor is immediately notified, speaks with the person, and sets up a same day appointment for counseling and intervention.

Schedules

Schedules for participants are important to keep individuals on track and focus of their mission and purpose for participation in the program. Friday at 6:30 p.m. the Life Experience convenes, because Friday is the last day of a tedious work period, when people want to relax. It is the beginning of the weekend, and the most crucial time when the spirit of partying surfaces. In addition, it is payday for most and a night to exhale. Life Experience is where participants can exhale without drugs and alcohol in a calm and relaxing atmosphere, experiencing a spiritual high.

The components work together to form a holistic context of intervention, however, success is sometimes immeasurable due to the many women who are incarcerated for drug abuse without receiving proper placement and education. As a chaplain and former a correction officer, I find that many women in jail receive no drug rehab, and in some prisons they receive little or no rehabilitation while incarcerated. The lack of rehab, education, and moral support on combating recidivism is a blatant failure of our court systems of America. However, the next section follows the success of three

women who have participated in the ANOTHER CHANCE PROGRAM, after having been drug free a years or more. What follows is a summary of their experiences.

Another Chance for Three Women

Ms. A is a twenty six year old single female with a history of substance abuse. Growing up in a Baptist tradition, she was taught that God is the answer to all her problems. Despite her knowledge of God and three years of college, Ms. A felt like an outcast from her community because she could not keep up with her higher-class friends with whom she lost contact. Ms. A could not get the job she wanted as an executive Secretary, but had to take what was offered her to survive, never making more than \$6.00 per hour. The only child, she dated a prestigious man and after three years of dating the relationship ended. Ms. A, said that in trying to deal with life issues of racism and discrimination that she was hurt and disappointed with her life and chose the quick fix of drugs. She struggles to remain sober and get back on track.

Ms. B is a twenty nine year old female, the mother of two boys, with a history of substance abuse. Rooted in the Pentecostal tradition, she is well aware of the power of deliverance, healing and hope. Notwithstanding her beliefs, she was divorced from a political leader after two years of marriage, and now raises her seven and ten year old boys alone. In her former job as a clerk, she made \$5.15 hour, and has one year of community college. Ms. B. is the middle of three siblings, but feels like a failure in her life because she could not get a higher paying job or remain married to the children's father whom she loves very much. After her divorce, Ms. B says she lost hope for success and felt alone. She desires to get her life right.

Ms. C is a thirty five year old female and mother of one three-year-old girl. She has a history of substance abuse and is separated from her husband, a police officer, after five years of marriage. She dropped out of high school in the twelfth grade but received a GED. Of her siblings, she is the only one to not graduate from high school. Ms. C's grandparents raised her in the African Methodist Episcopal tradition, and she is a former usher in the church. She believes in the power of the Trinity. Both her parents died in a car accident. Ms. C is a former waitress, making \$3.00 per hour, and complains that the world is corrupt and life is not fair because of race and gender discrimination that she constantly deals with on a daily basis. In a set of interviews, I asked each woman a number of questions to get a handle on their perspectives of their situation.

It was clear from my work with these women that each was aware of the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol addiction when asked what addiction meant to them. For instance, Ms. A: said "It is a bad drug habit, I cannot control." Ms. B: "It is drug abuse, which is bad for you." Ms. C: "It is a craving for drugs and alcohol or whatever." They each shared a common set of causes, which they attributed to their addictions. Ms. A claimed discrimination and racism in the systems, but especially on the job and the court system, while Ms. B attributed life problems of the world, and Ms. C blamed poverty and not being able to own her home or receive a decent job. It is noteworthy that among the women Crack/Cocaine was the prevalent drug contributing to their addictions along with either alcohol or marijuana. Even more significant for this study is that each woman was incarcerated for their drug offenses: Ms. A, twice and Ms. B, for possession of drugs, and Ms. C, three times for drug abuse. These findings are significant because they give

great support to the thesis that the war on drugs is a major contributor to the over all incarceration of black women in America's penal system.

Each participant as stated above was reared in the Church either by their parents, a mother or grandparents. Moreover, this factor contributed to their willingness to participate in the ANOTHER CHANCE program. Ms. A realized that she was living on false hope and needed help to get off drugs and turn her life around. Ms. B was tired of running from life problems and needed help to get off drugs, and Ms. C was ready to quit but needed help, she would come to realize that drugs were "the work of the enemy, Satan." All three women have been actively in the program for five months, starting in October 2006. Each had particular goals that they wanted to accomplish while in the program. Ms. A, wanted to remain drug free and start over in her life, so that she could buy a home. Ms. B, wanted to learn how to live drug free and give her children a better life with God and herself. Ms. C, wanted to learn how to remain sober, be successful and raise her little girl "to be all that she can be."

In their own assessments of the ANOTHER CHANCE program, the three women describe the benefits for them and their prospects for success. Ms. A, says: "I have benefited from the Life Experience sessions, on how to cope and be set free through Scripture and how to build a close relationship with God, which has strengthen me and made me a positive thinker." Ms. B, reports: "I have benefited through worship and I enjoy the sermons, which are relevant for today's life struggles. Most of all Life Experience is where I share my life problems and testimonies, and I learn how to use the Bible to help me stay strong. In addition, I use my gifts and talents in volunteering my service to others in the community, and this makes me feel good when I am helping

others. I am learning a lot, I did not know much about the Holy Spirit that comforts me and I learn how to pray.” Ms. C says: “I have benefited from just having someone to care about me, my parents gave me to my grandparents when I was a young girl. The love in the church and Life Experience are enriching and real that helps you to keep pushing when you sometimes feel down. The communication network system is great and I feel like I will be sober for the rest of my life.” It is clear from these women testimonies that the greatest benefit to them was the way that the various components of the program from Life Experience to Communication were vital to their estimations.

When asked whether they would recommend this program to other fellow women in similar circumstances the women’s responses were empathically, yes! Here are their comments: Ms. A. says: “Yes, because I have learned so much about the Word, I did not know, even as a little girl. Most of all, because the curriculum (Bible lessons) helps you to understand who you are, and your purpose for being on earth. It teaches one how to remain sober through, prayer, scripture, Life Experience, counseling and time management.” Ms. B also says: “Yes, I have tried to stop using drugs by myself, but this program guides you in the direction with an *“I can do it attitude,”* and I am encourage to progress with positive thinking.” Ms. C is most emphatic: “Of course! This program builds your confidents and helps you to accomplish sobriety through group therapy, counseling and self-analysis. I feel strongly that others can do the same.” When asked whether there were elements in need of improvement, both Ms. A and B were satisfied, saying, No. But each also expressed a powerful hope. Ms. A. said that she “hoped more drug abusers would come and be a part of the program, and Ms. B. hoped that “more churches would start a program like this; it is the key to successful living.” Of the three

women, Ms. C. saw room for improvement. She said: "Yes, I would like to see it add a residential treatment facility, where people with no shelter can stay, however, I am aware that this is in the plan for the future."

Another Chance to Pray, Fast, and Volunteer

Prayer

For the women in the program, each attributes the power of prayer and fasting to whatever success, they experienced from the ANOTEHR CHANCE program. They understood prayer to be the line of communication with God, whom they credit with the power to open doors of opportunity for change. Below is a collection of prayers prayed by the women in the program. They range in scope from prayers of renewal, dedication, triumph and help from temptation to prayers of thanks giving, discipleship and daily hope, as follows:

A Prayer of Renewal: Dear Lord, thank you for another chance to renew my life with you, forgive me of my sins, and renew my spirit that I may live for you. Transform the total person that I am and give me an attitude to live beyond my past. Satan, you have no place in my heart, mind or soul, I cast you out, in the name of Jesus. God's will is manifest in my life by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A Prayer to Live for God: Dear Lord, thank you for another chance to live for you and thank you for a joyful, abundant life that is mine through Christ Jesus. Teach me to live according to your will, and let me imitate you by being a light to others walking in darkness. Teach me your ways and encourage me to go forth in the spiritual riches you have promised. Show me your plans for my life that I may know my purpose on earth. Show me how to love myself that I may love others and mostly you. Lord, where I am broken make me complete again. Amen.

A Prayer of Triumph: Dear Lord, thank you for another chance to walk in victory over my adversaries, when I am weak, give me

strength, when I am troubled, give me peace, when I am distracted, keep me focused, when I become impatient, let patient become a virtue in my life. Give me power to cast down every stronghold of bondage, bind every yoke that hinders me, and cast down every weapon of destruction that I will live in victoriously over Satan. Lord, let me walk by faith and see your miracle of blessings in my life that set me free. Amen.

A Prayer for Temptation: Dear Lord, thank you for another day that I have not yielded to temptation, when I am tempted and doubting give me faith to overcome the enemy. In my dark moments, remind me of your healing power and your everlasting love, so that I may live courageously and faithfully today, and every day. Amen.

A Prayer of Thanksgiving: Dear Lord thank you for another day to say I am grateful for your blessings. Thank you for leading me to *Another Chance* program. Thank you for your love, forgiveness of sins, compassion, and delivering me from my drug addiction. Thank you for leading me in a new direction with a new walk, new talk, and new understanding of what life is all about through Jesus Christ. Thank you for always being there for me. Amen.

A Prayer of Discipleship: Dear Lord, thank you for another day to live for you, teach me to use my gifts, talents and skills to bring glory to your kingdom. Lead me in discipleship that I may invite others to seek a personal relationship with you. Let me pick up my cross daily, and follow your footsteps, that I maybe a powerful disciple in your ministry to the lost, un-churched and backslidden that they may recognize your goodness and glorify your name. Amen.

A Prayer of Daily Hope: Dear Lord, thank you for another chance to see and live in the beauty of your creation, teach me to live one day at a time and one step at a time. Use me daily in your service and allow me to grow spiritually and mentally that I may become a mature Christian. Teach me to be attentive to your word and willing to follow your direction each day of my being. Lord, walk with me and grant me your security and comfort as I progress in your way. Amen.

In the ANOTHER CHANCE program, prayers such as these are practiced daily. The women are encouraged to read, *Prayers of a Godly Woman*, written by Bart Dawson.⁴ In addition, fasting is a ritual for cleanliness and decontamination of the mind, body and spirit that encourages a personal relationship with God. Fasting is abstinence from food for the purpose of religious desires and spiritual discipline. The fasting instructions are as follows:

Fasting

Fasting is used for many different reasons and how long one fast is the choice of the church, group or individual. The ANOTHER CHANCE program proposes the seven-day Fast. Seven is the symbol of spiritual perfection, completeness and an important number in God's creation.⁵ In *Numbers in the Bible*, Robert D. Johnston suggests that seven is the most frequent numeral in the Scriptures, found fifty times in the book of Revelation where good and evil come to a climax. Further, the Sabbath is the seventh day and after six days, God rested in the knowledge of its perfection. In Genesis 12:2-3, Abraham received a seven-fold blessing by God: (1) "I will make of thee a great nation, (2) and I will bless thee, 3. and make thy name great, (4) and thou shalt be a blessing; 5. And I will bless them that bless thee and (6) curse him that curses thee, (7) and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

An example of how the fast is implemented in the ANOTHER CHANCE program is shown below. The Seven Day Fast begins with anointing and consecrating participants

⁴ *Prayers of a Godly Woman*, fourth Edition (Nashville: Brighton Books, 2004). Some of the prayers may contain some excerpts from this book.

⁵ Robert D. Johnston, *Numbers in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publication, 1990) 71.

(set apart for a sacred purpose). From 7 am. - 1 pm. Participants eats no food, only water. From 2 pm. - 8 pm. the only foods eaten are steam vegetables, fresh fruits and grains, and water for beverage. Finally, 8 pm. is the last meal of the day. During the fast, prayers take place three times a day at morning, noon, and night and preferable times are 7 am, 12 pm., and 8 pm. When the pastor calls for a fast the prayers usually concern the welfare of the church, its members, lost souls, world systems, leaders and other urgent matters to be addressed, From these exercises, participants learn to discipline their desires and build a sense of determination as they successfully sustain the fast.

Volunteerism

Volunteerism is a component that encourages the use of ones gifts, talents and skills to serve others. The Scriptural base for this ministry is Matthew 25:34-40. Every year the church gives free hot meals to the less fortunate on Thanksgiving. In addition, two weeks prior to Christmas, the church purchases gifts for children, and free clothes are given to adults at the Day Shelter. Volunteerism is mandatory for participants because it promotes an attitude of sharing and caring for the less fortunate, and it enhances social skills. Appendix A gives an example of a flyer for free hot meals, promoting the volunteerism of the ANOTHER CHANCE program.

Educating for Another Chance

Education is one of the most important components of transformation. It produces power and freedom when practiced on a daily bases. Life Experience is where education starts, the sessions are open for sharing real life struggles, problems and disappointments.

The Session schedule is as follows:

Opening Prayer
 Scripture
 Song
 Subject
 Text/Story
 Personal Problems relevant to Bible Story
 Discussion
 Solution–Bible base
 Prayer /Close

In the implementation of the ANOTHER CHANCE educational component, participants are consciously taken through a curriculum that is usually topical but move systematically toward a problem and resolution dynamic. In a typical lesson plan on Temptation and Satan based on Matt. 4:1-11, a definition of temptation is offered, for example, “Temptation signifies any attempt to entice one into evil,” and then the life experience question controls the interaction of the participants. In the following engagement, the question is: Have you ever been tempted to do something that you knew was wrong, and almost did it anyway?

Group Response: Yes.

Teacher: “I want you to share one temptation you have experienced in your life, whether today or last year.”

Group Discussion: One young woman said she was tempted to sleep with her stepfather. Another said she was tempted to steal a leather coat from a department store, and the other said she was tempted to commit murder of her own three children. These three women are participants in *Another Chance* program.

Teacher Responds: “Thanks for all your good examples, which suggest that Satan is at work. His work is to kill, steal and destroy and if he cannot attack you one way, he will try another way.”

Teaching Moment: How does Satan tempt people to act in unethical ways? Satan tempts individuals through his or her fleshly desires, pleasing the appetite of their sinful nature. What are some

appetites we desire to please as human beings? We want to please the lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, pride, and sexual desires (1John 2:16). The Bible suggests that Satan is the ultimate source of evil actions, contrary to the holy love of God.

The Story in Matthew 4:1-11, is about the temptation of Jesus. Matthew, the suggested author, traces the geology and earthly life of Jesus Christ that started in Bethlehem. In this text, Jesus is led by the Spirit into the desert and tempted by the devil, after he fasted for forty days and forty nights. At this point, Jesus is weak, hungry and tired. The capital "S" in Spirit signifies the Holy Spirit led Jesus to the wilderness. Why would the Holy Spirit lead Jesus to be tempted? Jesus' temptation was necessary to demonstrate his moral strength to fulfill his moral task on earth. The word tempt has two meanings, to test or prove. The first Adam yielded to temptation in the Garden of Eden and failed the test (Gen. 3). Jesus the last Adam met the devil face to face, and did not yield to his evil. The devil tried three times to tempt Jesus. First, he acknowledges Jesus as the Son of God, and commands Jesus to turn stones into bread, when Jesus was at his weakest point and his appetite needed to be pleased.

Jesus replied with the Word of God, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." This implies that it is better to obey God the creator and live, than to obey the creature and die. Food is not the most important thing in life, obedience supersedes. (2). The second temptation took place in Jerusalem on top of the temple, and the devil commands Jesus to throw himself down, as a divine display to prove he was the Messiah, which suggests a temptation of pride (1John 2:16). Jesus knew that it was not time to reveal his glory as the Messiah, the cross event must take place first, so He responded, "It is written, you shall not tempt the Lord your God." This suggests one cannot have glory before his or her life story of tribulations, meaning one's crown has to be earned. For example, a diamond is black graphite stone that surfaces from under the grounds of Africa, and appears as dirty rocks of no value, it is not until it goes through pressure and fire that it comes out shining clear and bright that it can be sold at a high price and worn as a precious stone. (3). The third temptation, Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, in exchange for worship to him. The reward would be the kingdoms of the world. Jesus responded with the words, "Away from me Satan, for it is written: Worship the Lord your God and serve him only," (Matt. 4:10). Jesus resisted the temptation by the Word of God, and the devil fled. Today, Christians will be tempted from various aspects of life. If the Messiah was tempted, we must prepare our heart, mind and soul to withstand temptation. Jesus temptation parallels the order of

temptation that Israel faced in the wilderness (Ex. 16; 17; 32).⁶ However, Jesus did not yield to the temptation. Question: How did Jesus resist temptation?

Resolution: How to resist temptation: 1. Pray: James 5:13, “Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray.” 2. Speak the Word of God: Matt. 4:10 –11, “Away from me Satan, for it is written: Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.” 3. Resist the Devil: James 4:7, “Submit yourselves, therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” 4. Put on the whole armor of God: Eph. 6: 13, “Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.” 5. Do not fear: 2 Tim. 1:7, “For God had not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and a sound mind.” 6. Make moral choices from the perspective of holy living.

As the study concludes, participants are free to raise questions or comments, afterwards, the study may close with a pray such as: “Dear Lord, thank you for the Word. Allow it to penetrate our minds, hearts and souls. Teach us how to use your word to help others. May your grace, love and spirit be with us until we meet again. Amen.”

Another Chance to Participant in the Life of the Church

Church Attendance and Sermonic Moments

Church attendance is a critical element in promoting the ANOTHER CHANCE program and it is crucial that participants are hearing from the pulpit sermons that are transformative. Among the participants, this element is critical to their success. Below are two excerpts of the kind of sermonic moments crucial to connect participants to the life of the church and help prevent relapse of drug abuse:

⁶ All biblical references are from the New International Version, Bible.

A.

Sermon Title: *The Spirit is Willing, But I am Disobedient*

Text: Roman 7:14-16

Question: Have you ever said to yourself, I will stop practicing a particular habit, but you continued to do it anyway?

Bread of Life: Paul says, *I do not understand what I do, for what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate, I do.* Paul seems to possess two personalities one of Dr. Jekyll and the other of Mr. Hyde. One of his personalities could be bipolar; when he sins, he does it to the bone marrow, suggesting the human side. The other personality is the Spirit that consists of the will, mind and soul, the godly personality. We all can attest to Paul's struggles based on some promises we failed to keep. We must understand that there is a war going on in our bodies, daily, between the two natures the old man, flesh, and the Spirit man, mind, heart and soul. Paul says I commit acts that my spirit man condemns, so he takes side with the law, but law condemns his sin too. The purpose of the law is to let one know when he has broken the law. Paul then realizes that his heart was carnal—stony (fleshly and lustful) because he could not gain victory, over the power of sin that indwells him. In conclusion, human beings cannot fight sin or temptation without the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul realizes that he is weak and powerless without God. It is with God Paul has his being, strength and power to stand against Satan and wiles of this world. In addition, it is Paul's choice to choose, which is good, based on the word of God. God gives us free will to choose that which is good or evil, a lesson taught in the Garden of Eden, by Adam and Eve (Gen.2:17; 3:6). ⁷

B.

Sermon Title: *Are you a Conqueror?*

Text: 1 John 5:4-5

Bread of Life: Booker T. Washington, once said, "A measure of a man's success is not what he achieves, but what he overcomes." The social order in America has standards that define successful living. Many people strive with all their heart to meet the world's standards. Therefore, they work, attend college, seminars, and retreats to advance in knowledge and skills. All of this is good, but what about the people who do not succeed, who have failed through the cracks of the world systems? Those with learning and physical disabilities, what about brother John the alcoholic? or

⁷ James Mayes, *HarperCollins Bible Commentary*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1988), 1057.

sister Sonya the drug abuser? and sister Betty the prostitute, who did not have loving parents to encourage and offer direction for a successful life? Many people are out cast of their society, because they are underachievers, who did not achieve the American Dream. Many give up. Some are hanging on street corners, selling drugs, sleeping on the streets, living in homeless shelters, and most are in prison. . . . In closing, we must not allow the world to set standards that put us in bondage, but set your standards based on God's perspective of living. Living for God's glory is a major accomplishment in life that gives meaning and purpose for life. Purpose gives direction and leads one to be a conqueror excelling for Jesus Christ.

The Colloquium

The ANOTHER CHANCE colloquialism is where participants learn how to use cognitive thinking to correct some of their erroneous and harmful beliefs. The women recognize, observe and monitor their own thoughts and confirm the relationship between cognitions, emotions and behavior so that they can be more aware of the kinds of decisions they make.⁸ The colloquium begins with prayer, scripture, and like the educational component is structured by a cognitive problem. For instance, all three women in the study used drugs as a cure for life problems, whether jobs, marriage, finance or children. While in the ANOTHER CHANCE program, the women were asked whether drugs help solve their drug problems? Ms. A. responded: "Well, when I first took drugs, I felt good and was calm about everything, but when my high was gone, a few minutes later, I was thinking about all of the same problems and never could overcome the issues at hand. I find that drugs are demons that slowly destroy your mind, body and spirit." Ms. B said that "I really thought that drugs and alcohol where the best things that ever happen to me. I felt relaxed and could enjoy life without the problems,

⁸ Aaron Beck, *Cognitive Therapy Literature*, class handout, 2000. See appendix.

but it was when the drugs and alcohol ceased that my thoughts returned to the same state of mind, depressed, angry, and feelings of loss hope. The higher I got, the weaker I became, now I am ready to make a change in my life. I discover that drugs are weapon of the devil that hinder, and take ones freedom to think logically. And Ms. C stated: "The truth is I thought drugs were the best things that ever happen for me. I would roll my cigarettes for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Drugs made me feel on top of the world, without a care of worry. When I came to my senses, I found that I was chasing a false hope, and a false sense of relief. Now, I am expecting new things to happen in my life. I want another chance to start over with my life. Drugs were false coping tools that destroy the body slowly and steal the mind quickly."

Also, while in the counseling component the women were asked to think about when they realized that they wanted to get off drugs and alcohol? Their responses are noteworthy. Ms. A said: "It was when I looked in the mirror and saw how skinny I was, and my bank account was empty, I wrecked my car riding on bald tires. My life went down hill fast, and I was shame to go around my family members and so call friends." Ms. B responded: "Well, I drove an expensive car, and use to dress sharp from head to toe. One night I wanted go out, but did not have any clothes to put on because they were all too big, so I went to my niece's house to wear a pair of her pants, who was fifteen years old and wore a size 3. I ironed the pants and put them on and they were too big. I was so disappointed and mad at myself, because I could not wear the pants or go to the club. I knew it was time for me to change my life or else I would die. In addition, I was shame to go around my family members; my children were staying with one of my cousins, I did not visit unless I ran into them at the store or on the streets." Ms. C stated

“I had many boyfriends and I would drop one, pick up another, if one did not buy me dope or buy what I wanted, I would leave him, and get another. One day I ran into a lawyer I was sleeping with on the side, and he asked me why was I living this way? He told me I was a pretty lady to be wasting my life. He spoke strongly that I did not belong in the strip club and I needed to be at home with my child. His statements made me feel like someone really loved me, although our relationship was only sexual. I took those words to heart. No one else that I slept with bothered to tell me the truth. I looked in the mirror and recognized, I was not myself and felt bad and angry with myself. I immediately wanted help to change my lifestyle so I could be a mother for my child and live a better life.”

The participants were encouraged to cognitively reflect on ways they can solve their problems without the use of drugs or alcohol. “Well, I know that I could not do it alone, I needed God to help me get off drugs, so I called Bread Of Life, because it is the only outpatient Bible based program in Clarksville, in a church setting. And I am glad I made the choice to come, meditation in the Bible/ praying, and Life Experience are great tools for improvement,” says Ms. A and Ms. B said: “I was contemplating what to do, I knew I needed help, I was raised in the church and wanted some spiritual help, I could not get off drugs myself. I heard about ANOTHER CHANCE over the radio. I called and was accepted, immediately. I am glad I did; now I have a family that supports and cares about my well-being.” All the lessons and studies are very helpful. I always heard my grandmother say, Jesus is the answer to all your problems. I have experienced miracles in my life and I know that Jesus is a Miracle Worker. I thank God for allowing me to be a participant in ANOTHER CHANCE. God helps those that help themselves. God’s word,

meditation, Life Experience and church attendance are essential for a better life, said Ms. C.

Before coming to ANOTHER CHANCE, Ms A had been drug free for thirty days and was in an inpatient facility before participating in the program, she said that she needed the out patient support to stay strong. Ms. B had been drug free thirty days and like Ms. A was in an inpatient facility. Ms. C had also been drug free thirty-two days and was on the stress ward in hospital before coming to this program. As the women contemplate the problem of relapse, their responses garner significant support for implementing programs like ANOTHER CHANCE. Ms. A says: "I pray, meditate in the word, attends Life Experience, and I am part of the Single Women's Ministry, which is great. I also, work in the church and volunteer my time." Ms. B says: "I stay busy in the work of the Lord, along with reading the Word, praying, and volunteering my time and keep a close relationship with God." Ms. C responded: "I find that life with Jesus is great, only if you put your total trust in him. I read the Word, pray and stay connected to God. Life Experience and Single Women Ministry are two great elements in this program."

Each counseling session concludes with the women citing the Bible covenant and prayer. The covenant stipulates:

This is my Sword of the Spirit. It is the written inspired Word of God. I can have what it says, I can have. I can be what it says, I can be. I can do what it says, I can do. The word is a Lamp unto my feet and a light into my pathway. I will read it, study it, speak it, spread it and obey it until death do us apart. Amen.

A typical prayer the women might say may be: Dear Lord, Thank you for this meeting that has inspired me to move forward in life with you. Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary. You created me for a reason. Give me spiritual wisdom to follow your direction for my

life's journey according to your infinite wisdom. Lord, camp your angles around us until we meet again. Amen.

Summary

In the ANOTHER CHANCE program, the women participating came to realize that life is what you make it and that opportunity is their choice. I found that the three women were willing to be participant in the program because they needed and wanted help to change their lives. It has been said that "You can take the horse to the water, but can't make him drink." The ANOTHER CHANCE program is that troth for those women and the essential component discussed in this chapter is the water. Their spiritual growth, social skills, the love of self, and God has been manifested in their hearts, minds and souls, through Life Experience, Prayer and Fasting, Volunteerism, Education and Counseling, and Church Attendance. That God has been the single most factor in meeting the needs of these women run through the testimonies of the three women participants.

Nancy Ramsey discusses the role of religion in empowering women. She points to the image of God's compassion, vulnerability and presence within Scripture in ways that can be freeing, notwithstanding Scripture's patriarchal language. She asserts that Scripture points to a transformative power that has the ability to communicate to those who are oppressed and abused in ways that call them to wholeness. This power is contained in many narratives of the faith and encourages persons to be courageous survivors.⁹ The three women said they wanted to get off drugs and they tried but could not do it on their own. In addition, each was incarcerated for drug abuse and harbored feelings of hopelessness and of helplessness. Through the ANOTHER CHANCE

⁹ Edward P. Wimberly, *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 63.

program, the power of God's word, the narratives of hope, and life experience were powerful tools that have help transformed the lives of these women. Now they feel as if they can walk forward and accomplish their goals in life with an "*I can do it attitude!*"

CHAPTER V

REFLECTIONS

ANOTHER CHANCE: COMBATING RECIDIVISM AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN: Mission is to empower the lives of women at risk of recidivism toward a productive and drug free life through education, spiritual guidance, and cognitive therapy. The research design is based on private interviews of three African American women who were residents in the Renewal House, which consists of a questionnaire, interviews and verbatims. Data collected from the residents, are resources used to learn from them what is vital and helpful in empowering them toward life change in their struggles with recidivism. Before the interview began all interviewees were first advised to sign a confidently statement and that fictitious names will be used. The researcher explained the procedures of the interview and asked if there were any questions or concerns, then proceeded with the interviews. Five women were interviewed, only three were chosen based on eligible criteria such as; race, age, faith tradition and history of drug abuse. It is clear from my interviews with the three women at Renewal House that each suffered from many of the same problems and used drugs as a coping device to deal with life systems.

“Between 1980 and 1992 the number of women in prison in the United States tripled, to a total of five thousand.”¹ “The number of women arrested for drug offenses

¹ Stephen R. Kandall, *Substance And Shadow* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 252.

increased by 89 percent' (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1992).² These results suggest that a program is needed to combat drug abuse among women. ANOTHER CHANCE is a six-month outpatient support recovery program established to combat recidivism among African American Women that suffer from addiction, oppression and internal knots. ANOTHER CHANCE was implemented in a church setting based on the model used at the Renewal House. Three African women heard about the program through a member and called to inquire. After a short interview with the pastor they were accepted into the program based on the criteria such as: a history of drug abuse, former residents of an inpatient facility for at least 30 days, believed in a higher power—God, and joined Bread of Life Cathedral, which relinquishes payment for service.

The program operates with nine essential components that are critical for transformation such as Location/Time, Life Experience, Prayer/Fasting, Volunteerism, Church attendance, Education, Counseling, Communication, and Schedule. All nine components are thoroughly explained in chapter four. However, Life Experience is vital in the sense it is where the three women share their stories and cognitive therapy is practiced, which helps one to recognize the problem, and how it affects ones thinking, and allows one to use cognitive skills to combat and correct their erroneous beliefs to live a better life. Example of the experience is written in detail in chapter four.

All three women have been in the program for six months and give their assessment of Another Chance as follows: The question was asked how has the program benefited you? Ms. A. says. "I have benefited from the Life Experience sessions, on how to cope and be set free through Scripture and how to build a close relationship with God,

² Kandall, *Substance And Shadow*, 252.

relationship with God, which has strengthen me and made me a positive thinker.” M. B. reports: “I have benefited through worship and enjoy the sermons, which are relevant for today’s life struggles. Most of all Life Experience is where I share my life problems and testimonies, and I learn how to use the Bible to help me stay strong. In addition, I use my gifts and talents in volunteering my service to others in the community, and this makes me feel good when I am helping others. I am learning a lot, I did not know much about the Holy Spirit that comforts me and I learn how to pray.” Ms. C. says: “I have benefited from just having someone to care about me, my parents gave me to my grandparents when I was a young girl. The love in the church and Life Experience are enriching and real that helps you to keep pushing when you sometimes feel down. The communication network system is great and I feel like I will be sober for the rest of my life.”

It is clear that these women have benefited from various components and have gained much insight.

The question was asked if they would recommend the program to other fellow women in similar circumstances the women’s response were empathically Yes!!

Comments are: Ms. A. says: “Yes, because I have learned so much about the Word, I did not know, even as a little girl. Most of all, because the curriculum (bible lessons) helps you to understand who you are, and your purpose for being on earth. It teaches one how to remain sober through prayer, scripture, Life Experience, counseling and time management.” Ms. B. also says: “Yes, I have tried to stop using drugs by myself, but this program guides you in the direction with an “I can do it attitude,” and I am encouraged to progress with positive thinking.” Ms. C. is most emphatic: “Of course! This program

builds your confidants and helps you to accomplish sobriety through group therapy, counseling and self-analysis. I feel strongly that others can do the same.”

The questionnaire, which served as a tool to gather pertinent information to determine what is helpful for transformation and effective in assessing the data the researcher needed to support or discredit the hypothesis. It was determined by the responses of the three women in the questionnaire that the program is helpful and enriching. This information is discussed in detail in chapter four.

There were no failures found in the program, but there was room for improvement expressed by the interviewees. When asked if there were elements in need of improvement, both Ms. A. and B. were satisfied, saying, “No.” But all expressed a powerful hope. Ms. A. said that she “hoped more drugs abusers would come and be a part of the program, and Ms. B. hoped that “more churches would start a program like this; it is the key to successful living.” Of the three women, Ms. C. saw room for improvement. She said: “Yes, I would like to see it add a residential treatment facility, where people with no shelter can live, however, I am aware that this is in the plan for the future.”

In the study, all three women were eager to be a part of the program and willing to cooperate in their search for hope, love and forgiveness. They all claimed that God made it possible for their sobriety through the ANOTHERCHANCE PROGRAM. The term *another chance* seems to be a powerful phrase in dealing with those that have lost hope. Nevertheless, true success can only be measured by the individual’s determination to remain sober.

Revisions

For future implementation of Another Chance program, the researcher wishes to suggest a couple of modifications that will be beneficial: Make all curriculum mandatory and note that three unexcused absents will terminate them from the program. Lastly, hire additional Spirit filled teachers to teach with new perspectives, to keep the curriculum interesting and vibrant for a more powerful program.

How Does Another Chance Speak to the Church?

Another Chance program is a church based program, designed for a church setting. It is a fact that many churches do not have relevant ministries in place to teach members how to deal with life problems. I have said, women are the *heart beat* of the church, the *main valve that pumps the blood*, to make things happen. They have stood at the frontline in the war against racism, discrimination, and injustice raging for freedom and justice for all. Unfortunately, women are considered outcasts of their church when they are called to *preach* or to *pastor a church*. Some mega churches have become dens of thieves, in the sense they are money hungry and many of their sermons promote getting rich, instead of how to transform the unjust systems for survival. When young immature saints go to church seeking hope for transformation, they find the male chauvinist pastor standing in the pulpit preaching to arouse the attention of the people with a shout of doubt, and many leave empty, looking for sustenance to fill their hunger.

Subsequently, when the drug abuser, drug dealer, prostitute and gays are in need of help they have to find it through other resources in the community by paying for counseling, drug rehab, therapy and so on, because there are no relevant ministries set up

in the church for transformation for Christian maturity or survival. In most mega churches like those seen on T.V. the members cannot speak with the pastor, they have to address their issues of concern to a third party, and the pastor is unaware of what is going on in the congregation, except when ones tithe and offerings are slacking. Most mega church pastors are too busy promoting themselves and their church business. It is very rare that the suffering and outcast will have an opportunity to speak or counsel with their pastor. This denotes blatant failure in the systems of the church, government, education and welfare that may contribute to suicides, violence, drug abuse, and high crime in America. If all leaders would obey the command of God in the perspective of Matthew 25:35-36, there would be less crime, poverty stricken and out cast people within the church and community. Nevertheless, Another Chance program is a relevant ministry that provides an opportunity for all churches to combat recidivism among African American women, as well as men. The program can be set up in any church to promote sobriety and transformation of the heart, mind and soul of those that suffer, today.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRES, CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT, ANOTHER CHANCE FORMS AND COGNITIVE THERAPY BY AARON BECK

Confidentiality Statement For A Practice of Ministry Research

In my interview with Interviewees, fictitious (fake) names will be used. All data collected will be helpful in the project and use to identify what is necessary and beneficial for the Project of Ministry. My project is ANOTHER CHANCE: Combating *Recidivism Among African American Women*. It is with hope that this project will become a model of choice for future Researchers.

Interviewee: _____ Date: _____

Interviewer: _____ Date: _____

QUESTIONNAIRE

For a Practice of Ministry Project

Date: _____

Name (optional): _____

Residence: _____

1. How did you come to know about this program?
2. Why did you come to this program?
3. What caused your addicted?
4. How long have you been with this program?
5. What is your status: single divorced married separated and how
 - a. If married or divorced how many times?
6. Do you have children? If so how many? Who has custody?
7. What is the highest-educational level you completed in school, GED, High School Diploma, College, (etc.)?
8. How do you think this program has benefited you up to this point?
9. What are you hoping to accomplish through this program?
10. Are you affiliated with a religion? If so, what faith tradition?
11. What offense(s) were you convicted and incarcerated?
12. Are you a repeated offender? If so, for what offense?
13. Over all, how many times have you been incarcerated?
14. What are the greatest challenges you have confronted in this program?
15. What does it take (mentally) to get through this program?
16. What are your dreams after completion of this program?

17. Would you recommend this program for other fellow offenders? If so, why? If not, why?
18. What improvements or changes would you make to this program, if any?

Case Study - Questionnaire for Program Directors

1. What lead to the origin and implementation of this program?
2. When did this program commence, and how long has it been enforced?
3. What is the Mission Statement for this program?
4. Who are the people targeted for this program, and why?
5. What is the maximum required time of enrollment to complete program?
6. What is the minimum required time of enrollment?
7. How are participates in the program transformed?
8. How long does one have to be a part of this program, before one is released back into society?
9. What method of assessment is used to guide the training?
10. What types of curricula or skills are taught to increase knowledge? Generally speaking, what programs are implemented for knowledge and awareness?
11. What percentages of offenders remain liberated from recidivism?
12. What is the percentage of offenders that relapse back to confinement?
13. How does this program work for repeated offenders?
14. To what extent is medications used in this program?
15. What would a scheduled day of training, consist of?

Thank you, for your time and information given to support this research.

Please return competed form by November 29, 2005, to Ms. Smith.

**ANOTHER CHANCE: OUTPATIENT RECOVERY PROGRAM
ENTRY ASSESSEMENT REPORT**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell _____

Marital Status: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Faith Tradition: _____

Previous member of what church:

Do you have children, if so, how many? _____
Ages _____

Date of Assessment: _____

Family History of Abuse, if any:

Mother's History _____

Social Status – today _____

Father's History: _____

Social Status – today: _____

Children Ages: _____

Social Status – today: _____

History of Substance and Treatment:

Type of drug abused: _____

Years of substance abuse: _____

Prescribed Medication: _____

Purpose of Meds: _____

Have you ever relapsed before or after treatment? _____. If yes, how many times _____?

Emotional Function of belief:

How has it affected you mentally?

What are your feelings because of this problem or belief:

Do you suffer from any of the three conditions listed below, because of the problem?

Depression _____

Anxiety _____

Suicidal _____

What are your hopes after completing this program?

I attest that all information is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge:

Member Signature: _____ date: _____

Pastor Signature: _____ date: _____

Note: The ideology of the questions and forms stemmed from Dr. Aaron Beck's Cognitive Therapy information.

**ANOTHER CHANCE: OUTPATIENT RECOVERY PROGRAM
LIFE EXPERIENCE PROGRESS REPORT**

Name: _____
Address: _____
D.O.B: _____
Marital Status: _____

Date Entered Life Experience: _____

Date of Completion: _____

Length of time in program: _____

What was your chief complaint or distorted belief upon entering the program?

In this program we believe that the word, prayer, praise, and a spiritual relationship with God is redemptive and transformative power that heals, deliver, and sets one free from bad habits or life problems, so that one can live with an *I can do It attitude*.

What did you learn from the Bible stories and Scriptures in dealing with life problems?

What did you learn about yourself as a believer of a Higher Being - Jesus Christ?

What does it take for you to remain sober?

Explain who God is to you?

What Bible story or stories were significant to help you see clearly and gave you hope in your life situations?

Do you think you are capable mentally, spiritually, and physically to move forward with life today, with an *I can do It attitude*? Explain:

List the essential components for successful living:

Has your mission been successfully accomplished in Another Chance?

After completion of this program, how you plan to remain sober and live a successful life?

COGNITIVE THERAPY - AARON T. BECK, M.D.

"Get to a person's emotions through his cognitions. By correcting erroneous beliefs, we can identify and alter excessive inappropriate emotional reactions."

Helps clients recognize, observe and monitor their own thoughts and confirm the relationship between cognitions, emotions and behavior - so they can be more aware and make decisions regarding them accordingly.

Helps the clients become aware of their own participation in cognitions, emotions and behaviors.

Homework assignments are given to help clients be aware of thoughts, emotions and behaviors and how they interact.

Cognitive Therapy teaches a client new skills of self-observation, problem-solving and coping skills gives clients new understandings of the connections of the cognitions, emotions, and behaviors and thus they have more capability of choosing new directions and making new choices.

Cognitive Therapy says that people live by rules that are unrealistic or used inappropriately or excessively.

The goal is to assist clients in recognizing and discarding self-defeating cognitions. Cognitive restructuring is helping clients to change their own self-verbalizations (talk).

Depression Scale is used to identify the intensity of the inappropriate emotional reactions and depressed states of mind so that the cognitive restructuring can take place.

Cognitive approach gets to the roots of relationship difficulties by focusing on hidden as well as obvious here-and-now problems rather than reliving childhood traumas.

First it is important to get an understanding of the couple/families difficulty by analyzing their descriptions and their responses to questionnaires. Prepare a cognitive profile that highlights their particular trouble area. Use all information at hand to get to the problems.

After getting a clear picture of a troubled relationship/couple/individual and the specific self-defeating attitudes and distortions in thinking and communication, explain the nature of the patterns to them.

Most common problems in marriages/relationships:

- the power of negative thinking; how negative perceptions can overwhelm positive aspects of the relationship.
- the swing from idealization to disillusionment; why the image of the other person shifts from all good to all bad.
- the clash of differing perspectives; how people (partners, family members) can see the same event and each other in completely different ways.

- the imposition of rigid expectations and rules; how setting up fixed standards leads to frustration and anger.
- the status in communication; how partners fail to hear what is said and often hear things that are not said.
- the conflicts over making important decisions and the breakdown of the partnership; how personal bias and incompetence disrupt its operations.
- the role of "automatic thoughts" that precede anger and self-defeating behavior; how negative thinking leads to provocation and rage.
- thinking disorders and biases that are at the core of the problems; how cognitive distortions operate
- the hostility that drives couples apart.

Cognitive Therapy helps couples overcome the resistances and discouragement that keeps them from improving their relationships. It is crucial that people recognize that they do have choices - that they are NOT simply victims of a bad relationship, no matter how hopeless it may seem. They can and should take responsibility for their relationships (and for themselves).

Cognitive Therapy helps clients look at the basic values of marriage - commitment, loyalty, trust, respect, support and security - and describes methods to neutralize the forces that undermine these foundations. It is essential to rebuild or reinforce the building blocks to the foundation that makes a relationship solid.

Cognitive Therapy teaches how to increase the sweet, loving parts of relationships (sensitivity, consideration, understanding, and demonstrations of affection and caring) and reduce the sour, irritating parts. What are things you can do to demonstrate to your partner that you care? Identify what you do and how you do it - practice demonstrating consideration, empathy, and understanding for your partner.

Cognitive Therapy teaches and practices correcting distortions and adjusting the thinking patterns to fit reality.

Cognitive Therapy teaches how to talk to each other and show that talking can be a source of pleasure rather than pain. Teach coping skills, problem solving skills and communication skills. Model in session and have them practice at home.

Use the skills and insights now acquired to work with solving special problems such as stress, sexual inhibition, infidelity, conflicts arising from both partners working.

Often changes in one partner can produce remarkable changes in the other partner or family members.

Cognitive Therapy teaches how to correct self-defeating patterns of thinking and counterproductive habits, improve communication, and help clarify and modify the marital problems. How to work together to eliminate miscommunication, to make the relationship healthy, enjoyable and fulfilling.

Marriage is at once a business, a child care and educational institution, and a social unit. Foster a spirit of collaboration. Approach the functions of marriage with reciprocity, fairness, and reasonableness.

Strategies for Increasing Client Compliance

1. Make assignments small - set reasonable expectations based on the client.
2. Assign tasks within the client's skill level.
3. Make assignments relevant and interesting link to the client's goals.
4. Collaborate with the client in developing learning assignments - Plan assignments together.
Are they willing to do it? Would you be willing to do it?
5. Provide a clear rationale (what she will learn and how it fits into her goals) for the assignment and a written summary (the client might forget so give it to them in writing).
6. Begin the assignment during the session - so if they do not understand you can help them.
7. Identify and problem solve obstructions to assignment - What could interfere with you completing this?" Discuss it. Maybe adjust the assignment.
8. Emphasize learning, not a particular desired outcome. Help the client learn something from every exercise completed.
9. Show interest, and follow-up in the next appointment. Show your own enthusiasm.
Encourage the client to spend time discussing the assignment.

Two common reasons clients do not improve:

1. Therapist has not conceptualized the problem in a helpful way.
2. Therapist has not made an accurate and complete diagnosis.

APPENDIX B

ANOTHER CHANCE BROCHURE, VOLUNTEER THANKSGIVING FLYER, AND RENWAL HOUSE INFORMATION

BREAD OF LIFE CATHEDRAL**ANOTHER CHANCE:****Drug and Alcohol Out Patient Recovery Program for Women****WHERE WE MAXIMIZE OUR APTITUDE**

Email – Sade42@netscape.com

Phone: (931) 906-9604

523 Poston Street, Clarksville, TN 37040

Mission Statement

Another Chance is holistic self-empowerment outpatient program for women that have abused drugs and alcohol, and obtained inpatient care at a residential treatment facility for at least thirty days. The mission is to empower women through education and spiritual guidance to sustain sobriety and independent living with an *I can do It attitude*.

Criteria for eligibility

- The applicant must be a woman in recovery from an addiction
- Must have received inpatient care at a drug rehabilitation facility for at least thirty days
- Must be a women of a faith tradition
- Must desire support from spiritual guidance
- Must desire education through Life Experience
- Must be a member of Bread of Life (non-members must pay a nominal fee)

Enroll Today

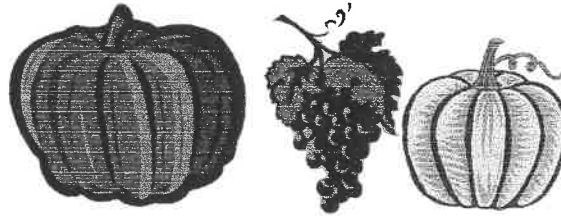
- Apply in person or by calling the church number listed on the brochure
- Another Chance Outpatient program provides spiritual guidance and education through Life Experience
- Christian Counseling is available as needed
- Insurance is not a requirement, but one has to be a member of the church to be a participant
- Schedule - Monday through Friday

Another Chance is a place where you can maximize your aptitude to become a strong, powerful, and successful woman of God.

Noteworthy information suggests that former participants acquired a positive attitude and strength to sustain sobriety. These women's inability to accomplish sobriety

was a failure without intervention of a Higher Being. All participants claim to have matured spiritually, mentally and emotionally with God, through Life Experience and church attendance. Noticeable progress in social skills and biblical curriculum is the result of hard work, perseverance and a willingness to succeed. Another Chance is a six-month biblical based program, but not an exhaustive one. Time proves to be a component that determines the outcome, however, true success is measured based on ones determination.

“HAPPY THANKSGIVING”



“A FREE HOMECOOKED MEAL”

WHAT: “HOT THANKSGIVING DINNER”

FOR: The less fortunate, the homeless and college students

WHERE: 523 Poston Street, Clarksville, TN 37040

DATE: November 21, 2006

TIME: 11: 00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Phone: (931) 906-9604

**Blessings brought to you by: Bread of Life Cathedral,
and Pastor Wanda Smith**

**“A CHURCH WITH A BIG HEART OF LOVE FOR
GOD AND ALL PEOPLE”**



What is Renewal House?

Renewal House is Nashville's first, largest, and most comprehensive long-term recovery community for women with substance use addictions and their children. We help women and families make a fresh start in life and break the cycle of addiction for future generations.

Renewal House Values

At Renewal House, the following are the values we live by, work by and teach our children:

Responsibility
Honesty
Respect
Spiritual Connection
Desire for Continuing
Development



History of Renewal House

In August, 1994, Davidson County Juvenile Court heard 40 abuse and neglect petitions each week. More than 60 percent of the mothers named in these petitions reported addiction as their primary problem. Drug addiction was resulting in 120 children a week---50 percent of whom were age six or younger--suffering because of their mother's substance abuse.

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Renewal House was formed in 1996 after a Nashville judge and local attorney saw these families being torn apart day after day. The foster care system couldn't handle the load, the jails were overcrowded, and taxpayers were shouldering the burden. They wanted to find a solution, and Renewal House was the answer. It is the only place in Middle Tennessee where mothers and their children can heal together from the wounds of addiction. Renewal House has expanded its services to include Intensive Outpatient Services and recovery rental apartments. Web site visitors can read out more about these programs under "What We Do". This is a key factor in the recovery process. Studies show that guilt and fear about leaving their children is the primary reason addicted women don't seek or stay in treatment.

Freda's Story

"I had nothing. I had lost my job, I had been evicted, and I absolutely had no dignity about myself at all; I had lost that too, all because of my drug addiction. My kids had become accustomed to a lifestyle of darkness; no lights, no food, and no water had become the norm for them. My oldest son should not have had to walk to the nearby college campus just to get water for us to use." *Go to the What We Do page to hear more of her story.*

—Freda, Renewal House graduate

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